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To

My Father

Who instilled in me a reverence
for philosophy and religion
while I was a mere boy.

PREFACE

I delivered the Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh Lectures for 1951 under the auspices of the University of Calcutta in 1952. Although I submitted the manuscripts within a week of the delivery of the lectures, the University Press has taken seven long years to publish the same. I do not exactly know the reasons for this unusual delay; in any case, I cannot hold myself responsible for it in any way.

When my book, "Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā" was published in 1932, I had a desire to deal with Buddhistic and Jaina Sādhanā and also with other religions such as Christianity and Islam. It has always been my firm conviction that a comparative study of the great World Religions is the best way to understand the essence of religion and to get rid of superstition and fanaticism. I am immensely grateful to the authorities of the University of Calcutta for affording me an opportunity of realising my desire by appointing me Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh Lecturer for 1951.

I have classified religions under three heads:—(1) Impersonal, (2) Personal and (3) Supra-Personal. I have discussed Buddhism, Jainism and Confucianism under Impersonal Religions. Christianity, Islam and Vaiṣṇavism have been placed under Personal Religions. Vedantism. Sufism, Taoism and the Johanine Gospel have been regarded as belonging to the head of Supra-Personal Religions. I have given the justification of my classification in the appropriate places and hence do not elaborate the point here.

The present age is pre-eminently the age of Science and is not the age of Religion. I have attempted to find out the cause for the modern indifference to religion and have dealt with its present day opponents. I have discussed the views of Bertrand Russell, Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx and have attempted to reply to their objections. Unless the objections to the religious view are successfully met, there is no use explaining the religious doctrines elaborately, and so

I have attempted to defend the religious view criticising the views of the opponents of religion.

The Supra-Personal Religions have been placed at the top of the classification and I have made it sufficiently clear that the stage where the difference between the self and the not-self, between the subject and the object, is transcended, where all 'why's are for ever stopped, where differences calling for an explanation are overcome, cannot but be regarded as the ultimate stage, as the climax. It will perhaps be evident from these pages that I am a supporter and believer in the Supra-Personal Religions, and that I have not lost any opportunity of proving the superiority of the Supra-Personal stage. It will be amusing to know that a great erudite scholar, a deeply religious soul, a devout Vaiṣṇava, and for whom I have great admiration and respect and who was kind enough to read this book in type-script, wrote to me that I had written the book only to show the excellence of the Supra-Personal Religions and their superiority to the Personal Religions. I am sorry I cannot disclose his name and express my gratitude to him for his valuable suggestions.

I have everywhere attempted a parallel study of the great religions and have shown that all the Impersonal Religions teach almost the same thing. So also is the case with the Personal and the Supra-Personal Religions. I have attempted to bring out the bright side of the different religions and their noble teachings and to ignore their weak points.

In the last Lecture, I have dealt with the problem whether there can be one universal religion. The realisation of the kingdom of spirit is the essence of religion and all the higher religions agree in their attempt to establish the kingdom of the spirit. This great realisation, the realisation of the divinity by the human being, is the universal thing in religion, and is the one universal religion in the best sense of the term.

This book may be regarded as a supplement to my "Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā," and if it is read in that light, great benefit may be derived from it. Many theoretical discussions which had to be avoided in the former book have

been included in it and many practical hints which were included in the first volume have been omitted here. Some valuable points from my book " Causality and Science " and also from my " Studies in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad " published in the " Prabuddha Bharat " have been given in this book.

N.K.B.

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THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION

LECTURE I

The Fundamentals of Religion

Religion is man's attitude towards Reality which is regarded as something trans-human, something more than man. There is hardly any race, any people which is devoid of the sense of religion in some form or other. The sense of awe or mystic fear seems to be an important ingredient of the religious consciousness in almost all the early stages of its growth. When primitive people are found to worship higher powers and to offer sacrifices to them, it is the sense of fear that induces the action. The stronger powers are propitiated in order that they may not do any harm to those who worship them. The nature of the powers that are worshipped is not known in detail, but this much is known that they are immensely more powerful than human beings and that the latter have no other alternative but to submit to them and seek their favour by propitiation.[1] Even in early Greek religion, we find that the gods need not observe the rules of morality and that the code of sexual purity is not to be applied to them. Moral laws have to be observed by human beings, but the gods who excel men infinitely in power and strength have no necessity for observing them. Gods are arbitrary powers who can do anything they like and men have to be in constant fear of the gods. The conception of divine powers as just and merciful, as benevolent and friendly, is of later growth.

In advanced religions also, the sense of awe is not absent. God is regarded as infinite, and the difference between man who is finite and God who is infinite is never forgotten.

[1] "Fear is the basis of religious dogma as of so much in human life" "It is fear of nature that gives rise to religion".
Bertrand Russell, "*What I believe*"—p. 19.

"How can man, the finite and the contingent, solidly experience the Abiding and the Infinite?" is a question that is not unoften asked by distinctly religious souls, and even Baron von Hügel speaks of a 'confusedly concrete sense of the infinite'. It is evident that it is not the primitive sense of fear of an arbitrary power that is working here. It is not the dependence of the weaker power on the stronger powers that is expressed in this sense of contrast between the infinite and the finite. It is, on the other hand, the sense of awe that comes from the feeling of the sublime, the feeling of something infinitely higher in quality. This sense of awe is aroused by the feeling of one's own littleness in the presence of the majestic grandeur of the object which appears as the 'Other', by the feeling of one's unholiness and impurity in the presence of the Other that appears as the holiest of the holies and as purity personified. It is true that something of the object must be known in order that it may arouse admiration and worship, but it is to be remembered that the greater part of it remains uncomprehended and that this baffling of the finite intellect in the presence of the Infinite Beyond is what is involved in the sense of the majestic awe that is an essential constituent of the higher religions. Herbert Spencer's Absolute is unknowable because the finite intellect that deals with the relative discovers its imcompetence when it is sought to be applied to the Absolute. Spencer finds the essence of religion in this recognition of the transcending majesty of the Absolute and does not hesitate to proclaim this agnostic attitude to be the most important and universal element in the religious consciousness. He regards this sense of the Infinite Beyond, this sense of the Reality that is beyond all limitation and finitude, this sense of the Absolute that transcends everything relative and everything particular, to be the basic religious consciousness and he attempts a reconciliation between Religion and Science by dividing their kingdoms and assigning to the former the unknowable and to the latter the knowable. Everything other than the feeling of the Incomprehensible Infinite is mere dogma and superstition which conflict with science because they intrude upon the domain of the latter. Although Spencer's views have been criticised vehemently by theolo-

gians like John Caird on the ground that by making the Absolute unknowable, he has dismissed religion altogether and has maintained the position only with a glaring inconsistency, it is to be seriously considered whether higher agnosticism may not be regarded as the special mark of advanced religions. When the Upanishads declare, "He who thinks he knows it verily knows it not; he who thinks he has known it not, he knows it. It escapes those who think it to be completely known; it is within the vision of those who know it to be incomprehensible", they are perhaps giving vent to an element of higher agnosticism. If the Absolute is not felt as the Transcendent Sublime, as that which surpasses the mind and the intellect, as that which is something other than the finite and the relative, it is doubtful whether there has been a dawning of the real Infinite at all and whether the spurious Infinite has not been confused with it. The incomprehensibility of the Infinite that has been expressed in the Upanishads repeatedly cannot be interpreted to mean agnosticism in the lower sense which tends towards atheism, because there are innumerable texts which leave no doubt that the Absolute is not only realisable but also that this realisation is the highest thing, the *summum bonum* in the life of man and that this realisation is the most direct, the most intimate and the clearest and the most distinct revelation. The Absolute is unthinkable (atarkyam), incomprehensible (aprameyam) but is also knowledge itself (jñānam), knowable and deep-rooted in the hearts of all (jñānagamyam hṛdi sarvasya dhiṣṭhitam).

The sense of fear is present in some degree even when religion is identified with morality and God is conceived of as the moral governor of the universe. The reward of the virtuous and the punishment of the wicked, everlasting Heaven for the good and eternal damnation or Hell for the unrighteous, form the basis of the theory of religion. At the early stages, religion in every country is inseparable from morality. The commandments of God supply the moral codes, and whoever follows the commandments is moral and religious together. Morality at this stage is nothing more than obedience to the law and the obedience is due more to the fear of the ruler of this universe who enforces these laws

than to anything else. An action is moral not because it is intrinsically good but because God wills it; more strictly speaking, the question of intrinsic worth of an action is not raised at all at this stage. God is no longer the arbitrary and whimsical despot of the primitive people, it is true, whom one is to be in constant dread of; but He is still the stern ruler who enforces the laws without any exception. At this stage, religion becomes almost a void and morality also becomes a nullity if the dread of Hell be omitted from the curriculum. The negative injunctions, the commandments as to what is not to be done, the *Nishedhas*, are more powerful agents in every religion than the *Vidhis* or the positive rules of guidance.

The life of the law, whether we speak of it as the life of the moral code or the life of the commandment, is neither *true* morality nor *true* religion, as obedience has to be enforced through fear of punishment. It is another thing, an altogether new thing when we pass from 'the life of the law' to the 'life of love'. Man attains to a new birth when he is favoured with the vision of the moral ideal, of the really good, and is attracted to it by its dazzling splendour. The beauty that he now beholds is very different from all that he has seen before and he is drawn towards it spontaneously. It shines by its own light and has not to borrow even a little from anything other than itself. It is the most significant thing in the life of the human being when the good establishes itself as the good by its own right and appears as the most beautiful thing in the universe, when nothing else appears to be as beautiful as it is so that that may be exchanged for it or desired in lieu of it. Anything other than the good appears to be ugly and a positive repulsion is felt against it. The Good at this stage is no longer a far off ideal, a construction of the imagination or an intellectual conception, an abstraction or an unrealised dream, but a concrete object that is seen and loved spontaneously. The question : 'why should one follow the good?' loses all meaning at this stage. The Good is to be followed because it is good and for no other reason. Any consideration of any reason beyond itself would interfere with its intrinsic worth and would dethrone it from its sovereign position. It is use-

less, if not impossible, to attempt to show the intrinsic beauty of the Good to those who have not felt it and have not been initiated into its esoteric truth, like trying to prove to the blind the beauty of day-light or to the deaf the beauty of the symphony of Beethoven. The beauty of goodness reveals itself at a certain stage of development naturally and spontaneously, but before that stage of maturity is reached it cannot be felt. It follows like every other thing the natural law of development and there is no dark or hidden process here nor is there anything miraculous or mysterious in the revelation. What seems impossible even at the stage immediately preceding the manifestation appears perfectly normal and natural when the required development is attained for its full expression. The age of puberty reveals a natural impulse that is not even suspected earlier; similarly, however absurd it might seem to the degenerated man of the modern age that there should be such a thing as the Good which is good *per se*, which is good because of itself and for no other consideration and which reveals itself to be supremely beautiful and spontaneously attractive, it is nevertheless true that the same man who was not able to think of morality and goodness except in terms of reward and gain a moment ago may find himself suddenly converted to a new scheme of the universe where eternal values and not utility or profit reign supreme. It is to be distinctly understood that although we have described it as a sudden conversion, there is no magic in the process and it is perfectly scientific. The science of diseases recognises periods of incubation and just as the latent disease does not show any symptom during the period of incubation but manifests itself suddenly, so also the Good which was always there reveals its beauty all on a sudden and captivates the soul. It it not to be supposed that what happens to a particular individual or only several individuals at best has no right to be recognised as anything universal or objective and hence no rational study has any obligation to take it into account. The revelation of the Good is not a concern of any private individual as such but it is something objective and universal and should be regarded as the clearest and the most undisputed of all objective facts. It is not a fact that only this individual or that individual feels

its presence; it is, on the contrary, what every human being experiences and is bound to experience at a certain stage of his growth and development. There is no uncertainty in the matter, no 'it may or may not come', but when the required development is attained, it is bound to come. Man is inherently good being made after the image of God and whatever delay there may be in the process of manifestation and however long may be the period of preparation and probation, the day is sure to come in the wider life of every individual when the Good reveals itself in all its glory and splendour.

The conception of pure and noble morality which we have envisaged above does not fall far short of the highest conception of religion. So long as the Good remains an ideal which it is felt ought to be followed but which is not in harmony with the inclinations and impulses and is rather at variance with them, it is true there is a great distance from the conception of real religion. But when the Good attracts us, when it is found to be not only true and good but is felt to be supremely beautiful, when we cannot keep ourselves away from it, when we are spontaneously drawn towards it and surrender our whole selves to it, when we have recognised it to be our own Higher self, when we have found this to be the central thing in the universe, when we have identified it with the highest values in life, when we have seen it to be the ever abiding thing permeating and pulsating through all the fleeting and temporary things of the universe, when we have recognised in it the culmination and perfection of all our endeavours, when we have reached in it the harmony of all apparent contradictions and the solution of all seeming difficulties, we have really identified it with the God of religion and it is a meaningless question to ask whether it is morality without religion or whether it is an instance of religion without God. Religion in the highest sense is faith in the abiding values of life and God is the embodiment of all values. Truth, Beauty and Goodness assume the name of God when they converge towards one another and are realised with such definiteness and clearness that they appear as a concrete reality and not as a mere abstract ideal. Religion is nothing if it is not concrete experience and the Great Hunger and the unceasing unrest or the divine discontent, as it is called, cannot end

until there is the fulfilling experience of the Absolute. There is a dim and vague sense of the Infinite in every human being which forbids him to be satisfied with anything finite and presses him ever forward in pursuit of the unknown thing which he wants in the depths of his soul but which he has no clear consciousness of. When something is presented to him, he knows only that it is not the thing he wants but if asked further he cannot clarify what it is that he seeks, just as when a person forgets a familiar name he cannot say for the moment what the name is but he can confidently reject all names suggested to him as not the right one. The unknown thing, like the forgotten name, lies in the deep recesses of the subconscious and has not yet risen up to the surface of clear consciousness. True religion has its origin in the experience of God and must have its culmination in that experience. The finite human being could never have formed the idea of the infinite even by his wildest imagination and there would have been no possibility of any talk of religion had it not been the fact that the idea of the infinite is inherent in the nature of the finite and is suggested to him in infinite ways through his successes and failures, victories and defeats, gains and losses, trials and tribulations, joys and sufferings. It is true it is nothing but a vague and confused sense in the beginning and is only detectable by its later growth, but still it is to be noted that it is not a theory or a dogma but genuine experience. It is the indefinite feeling of something which is not found in anything finite but a sense of which is unmistakably implanted within him that urges him on and allows him no rest till he has experienced it in its full glory. When the Great Revelation comes, it affiliates itself to the earlier undefined experience and is clearly recognised to be merely its consummation. Mysticism is right in emphasising the importance of experience in religion. The yearning of the finite after the infinite, the rejection of everything finite as not the thing wanted, shows clearly that the infinite is not anything altogether new or unknown to the finite and establishes the truth of Plato's doctrine that all knowledge is remembrance. Religion, as its etymology implies, is only a re-establishment of the bond which has apparently been lost. If the infinite is alien and foreign to the finite, if the finite is only finite and the infinite altogether

opposed to it, religion becomes an impossibility. But the experience of countless millions in all climes and ages cannot be dismissed dogmatically and if philosophy is interpretation of experience, religious experience which forms an important aspect of human experience, must have to be satisfactorily explained. It cannot be said that as the infinite is very different from the finite, there is no possibility of the experience of the infinite by the finite. This would imply the rejection of fact or experience to suit a theory. The experience of the infinite testified to by innumerable millions, cannot be ignored and for its rational explanation it has got to be admitted that the infinite is not anything foreign to the finite but is latent in it and is only its fuller manifestation. In fact, some of the religious souls declare their identity with the Infinite at the culminating stage of their experience. This is true self-consciousness, this is the highest religion, this is the highest philosophy. All that man is seeking for ever is attained at this stage. By the widest stretch of imagination, man could not have thought of the identity of the infinite and the finite, and if religion is testifying to this truth, it must be through experience and here we find the most glaring instance of facts being stranger than fiction. The way in which the experience is described, the terms in which it is embodied and the freshness and vigour with which it is upheld leave no doubt as to its veracity and when eminent persons belonging to different climes and different ages and brought up in very different civilisations tell the same tale, it is nothing short of dogmatism, if not also perversity, to ignore its importance or dismiss it as unreal. When the great sage Yājñavalkya says in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, that the great knowledge has touched him (māṃ spṛṣṭa) and that he has assimilated and digested that knowledge (anuvitta mayaiva) and that he has been fully awakened and the whole memory has arisen in him (pratibuddha), it is difficult to miss the flavour of fresh and living experience in those texts. When, again, Plotinus speaks of the three transports in his life and describes his experience in those hours of high visitation, it is not easy to disbelieve the vivid testimony. When the Upanishads state that he who passes from this universe without knowing and realising the Highest Reality misses his mission in life and is

to be pitied, and that he who, on the other hand, departs from this universe having attained that realisation fulfils his destiny and is to be congratulated, there remains no doubt that it is a definite experience that the texts have in view. Mystics are the people who have attained a vision of the Highest Reality and have declared in unmistakable terms the richness and brightness of the experience. It is the special task of these mystics to emphasise the value of realisation and experience in religion and to show that genuine religion goes beyond dogmas and creeds, rites and ceremonies.

It is not to be supposed, however, that rituals and ceremonies, dogmas and creeds, are useless things and ought to be excluded from religion. Those who overemphasise the value of experience at the cost of the external observances do the greatest disservice to the cause of religion. It is true, the external practices, rituals and worship, do not by themselves constitute the essence of religion; they lie at the outer surface and do not reveal the truth and glory of religion. But it is to be remembered that it is these seemingly meaningless and monotonous practices, apparently useless dogmas and creeds that keep religion going. The sublime realisation that constitutes the essence and the inner core of religion comes when one is working at the highest levels and even at those levels only in some specially fortunate moments. It is not possible to remain long at that level or to maintain the pitch. There is a slowing down, a receding, an automatic coming down. The dogmas and the creeds are merely devices to give the dynamic experience a static shape so that it may be retained in some form or other, however remote that may be from its original. It may be objected that it is attempting to substitute mummies for the living men. But the objection loses its force when it is remembered that as the living man cannot by any means be kept alive any longer, the mummy is the only possible substitute for it. Similarly, it is to be noted that the dogmas and creeds, which are altogether useless when one is immersed in happy communion with the Divine, are the only possible ways to awaken the memory of that experience and arouse it again. Then, again, the high pitch of working that is required for spiritual realisation does not lie within the capacity

of immature souls. Religion would have been a thing of a few moments and a thing only of a few souls, if the dogmas and the creeds, the rituals and the practices had been excluded from it and only the experience of God had been supposed to be its only constituent. The value of dogmas and creeds lies in embodying the dynamism of spiritual experience in a static form and so making it available to common minds although as a very faint symbol of the original. It should be clearly understood that these are not meant to be substitutes for spiritual experience and these can never be its substitutes; but it should not be forgotten that as symbols suggestive of the experience these are of immense value, and any attempt to discard them from the scope of religion is sure to cut at the very roots of the latter. The only way to reach the experience is through these symbols and however inadequate they may be as embodiment of the experience, they are indispensable as means to the end. The dogmas and the creeds should not be supposed to be altogether dissociated from experience; they have their origin in experience and they are also intended to lead again to experience which is their ground. The Kularnava Tantra describes the relation between the external practices on the one hand and spiritual realisation on the other, in a very significant way. "When the southern breeze blows sweetly, what is the use of a fan made of palm-leaves?" When there is God-realisation, when the soul is drinking deep in the ocean of bliss, all dogmas and creeds, all rituals and ceremonial observances are left far behind and these cease to be of any use whatsoever, they being farthest removed from the sublime experience. The Mahanirvana Tantra also says that they are the lowest in the scale of values—they are *'adhamādhama'* worse than the worst or lower than the lowest, ' brahmasadbhāva' communion with the Absolute or God-realisation is the highest; meditation of God comes next and occupies the middle position (madhyama), reciting the name of the Lord and singing hymns in praise of Him is low in the scale, *adhama;* external worship belongs to the last class *adhamādhama.* But it is to be noted that although these most authoritative scriptures unambiguously declare the worthlessness of the rituals as compared with the highest stage of God-realisation, they unhesitatingly prescribe the performance of

the rituals as compulsory for the lowest stages. What is helpful at one stage loses its value at other stages and may not be at all applicable there, but in its own level it is indispensable.

The religious experience is sought to be stabilised by means of dogmas and creeds on the one hand and by a justifying system of philosophy on the other. Every religion has its supporting philosophical theory and every philosophical system may be traced to the experience on which it is grounded. The experience that realises the Infinite as an object distinct from but related to the subject seeks rationalisation in a philosophy that speaks of the correlativity of the Infinite and the finite. The Infinite, according to this philosophy, must realise itself in and through the finite and has no existence apart from the finite. The Infinite and the finite are bound up in a unity and they live or die together. The Infinite divorced from the finite is a mere chimera and the finite unrelated to the Infinite is an unmeaning abstraction.

The Finite acquires all its meaning as related to the Infinite; its finitude becomes significant only by the side of the infinitude of the Infinite. Similarly, the Infinite which has no finite by its side is not an intelligible concept or a meaningful reality. The Infinite dissociated from the finite loses all meaning and becomes itself finite. The opposition between the finite and the Infinite becomes apparent when they are brought together, but it breaks down when they are sought to be opposed to and separated from each other. However paradoxical the above statement might seem, it perfectly describes, according to this system of philosophy, the true relation of the finite and the Infinite. In the presence of the Infinite object, the finite subject is dwarfed and pales into insignificance, and unless the finite and the Infinite are put together in the scales there cannot be the consciousness of either the Infinite or the finite as such. But a different experience will seek justification in an altogether different philosophy. The dualism of the finite and the Infinite or even a qualified monism which regards the finite to be a part of the Infinite will appear absurd to the person who realises the Infinite to be the all-encompassing reality that knows no limitation and finitude and finds nothing else than the

Infinite. There cannot be any question of the reality of the finite to be put in relation to the Infinite. There cannot be the finite *and* the Infinite. How can the Infinite allow anything by its side? There is and can be nothing outside the Infinite. The finite finds itself in the Infinite and realises that the Infinite is everywhere, the finitude, the segmentation, the partial presentation, the quantitative variation, the differentiation having no basis in reality. The Infinite is not a quantitative category, it does not mean that it spreads over whole space. It is a qualitative category which stands for absence of limitation, which signifies fulness and perfection and although analytically different from the category of the Absolute is identical with it. It is a great mistake to suppose that this conception of the Infinite denies the finite or that it leaves no room for the reality of the finite. It is not a negative conception—it is not what the finite is not. It is, on the other hand, the most positive of all conceptions which leaves nothing outside it. This experience of the Infinite is not the apprehension of the object by the subject, but the realisation which transcends the tripartite division of the subject, object and process. It is not an object-consciousness nor a subject-consciousness, not any divisional or discriminative awareness but a supra-relational revelation (prakāśa). The division between the subject and the object and the process relating them have been totally absorbed in the transcendent experience and the finitude of the apprehending subject can no longer be retained. The finite subject is elevated and in its fulness it identifies itself with the Infinite and there remains no occasion for it to repent the loss of its finitude and individuality. It is not, strictly speaking, identifying with the Infinite; it is rather recognising its own infinitude and realising that its finitude is illusory. It is not the attainment of anything new, not the gaining of what it was not, but it is only recognising its own self. This experience of the Infinite has sought its justification in the philosophy of unqualified monism. In every case, experience comes first and a system of philosophy is built later in order to explain the experience. The great Hegelian philosophy, for example, openly justifies Christianity, and the relation of the finite and the Infinite is formulated in such a way that

it may be in harmony with the conception of Jesus as the son of God. This relation of Philosophy and Religion shows clearly the usefulness of both. A philosophy that has no basis in experience is mere idle speculation; an experience which cannot be rationalised is very much to be doubted and hardly occupies a position in any way better than a hallucination. We now come to understand why even the sublime realisation of the Upanishads forming the religion of the Vedanta which is stated to lie beyond the sphere of mind and speech has been supported by an elaborate system of philosophy. While admitting that the realisation transcends reason and lies beyond the division of the subject and the object it puts the experience to rigorous logical test in order to show its intelligibility and perfect accordance with reason. Although reason cannot yield the experience itself, although philosophy cannot be a substitute for religion it is of great value in distinguishing between genuine and pseudo religion, between sublime experience and hallucination. The statement, 'All that is real is rational and all that is rational is real' is no mere sectarian doctrine of the Hegelians but expresses a great truth and may be regarded as a description of the very essence of Philosophy. The task of philosophy is to show that the actual and the possible are not realms apart and that a clue to the actual may be supplied by the possible. If harmony or consistency is the test of truth, if reason is the organ through which Reality reveals itself, it is only natural to suppose that the way to reality must be reason and reason alone. This forms the high claim of philosophy and explains the true relation between Philosophy and Religion. If religion gives the actual experience, philosophy shows that the experience is in perfect accord with reason. The task of philosophy is finished when it is able to show that something is possible, that there is nothing in it which is not in harmony with reason, that there is no inherent contradiction or inconsistency in it, in other words, that it is perfectly rational. As Reality has no meaning apart from its rationality, it is enough, philosophy thinks, if the possibility of the actual is shown. Philosophy cannot go further and there is also no necessity to go further. Philosophy is no mere speculation dissociated from experience, is no mere study of the possible as distinct from the actual, but is always intimately bound up

with experience and works hand in hand with it. It is not only grounded in experience but also shows the way and leads up to experience. The study of Comparative Religion is immensely helpful in discovering the essence of Religion. The essential is brought to clear light as the persisting and pervading factor in all religions in distinction from what is varying and inessential in them. It is expected that a wide knowledge of the innumerable differences in the customs and practices, in the dogmas and doctrines of the various religions will convince people that these conflicting elements are not as important as the fact of spiritual experience or as the virtues of charity and love emphasised by all higher religions and will be able to uproot fanaticism and narrowness from the field of religion. It is mostly due to ignorance and failure to understand the truth embodied in the other religions that an unholy conservatism arises among the followers of a particular religion and not only quarrels happen but even wars are fought and the most irreligious acts performed under the false notion of promoting the cause of religion. Unless this ignorance is removed, no amount of persuasion will be able to eradicate the evil of fanaticism, and the study of Comparative Religion, if rightly undertaken, is perhaps able to contribute more to the service of humanity than anything else in this sphere of life. It is to be remembered, however, that if we merely confine our attention to the elements common to all religions, we shall not be able to discover the essence of religion. What is common to the lowest and the highest is evidently the lowest and if we regard this to be the important and essential element we shall be guilty of the fallacy of explanation by reduction, of explaining the higher by the lower, of ignoring the value and significance of the higher and of thus reducing the higher to the status of the lower. The fruition and the development that manifest themselves clearly in the higher stages and are absent or at least only latent in the lower are lost sight of, and in the attempt to reach the common and the universal element the most significant and important things have been missed. As one writer beautifully puts it, "There is more in the flower than in the seed, more in the fruit than in the root", and if we look only to the antecedent states for the

explanation of a stage of consciousness and are blind to the idea that guides it from the very beginning and to which it is developing and approximating, if we confine our attention to the origin and the beginning and forget to interpret the meaning and significance of the thing by reference to the end, if we seek to understand a thing by its inception and not by its consummation, we shall be committing ourselves to the worst Naturalism and be missing the highest values in life by deliberately blinding ourselves to the dazzling treasures revealed through the ceaseless flow of time. In order to distinguish between the essential and the inessential, it is beneficial if Comparative Religion does not limit itself merely to the study of dogmas and creeds, customs and practices of the various religions, but also notices the systems of philosophy that seek to justify the different religions. Comparative Religion should not be wholly separated from Philosophy of Religion, and the facts observed should be interpreted by reference to the wider end of religion and philosophy. Dissociated from this reference, the study of comparative religion is bound to degenerate itself into a mere recording of curious and fanciful stories. Just as mere philosophizing without reference to the facts collected by the science of religion is hardly better than empty abstraction, so also the blind cataloguing of facts is very likely to miss the most important things and to misunderstand the significance of the facts recorded if these are not studied and interpreted in the light of the philosophy underlying them. The facts are important only as illustrations of principles enunciated or supposed to be enunciated in religion and should not be regarded as anything more than that. The very same facts admit of very different interpretations and in the field of religion which is concerned more with the 'why' than with the 'how' mere facts as such cannot and should not be taken at their face value. From the same observed facts, for example, Julian Huxley concludes that in the religion of primitive people belief in God and immortality has no place, while Malinowski is of opinion that these two beliefs are the essential elements in all religions and are present in primitive religions as well. Professor Huxley thinks that belief in God and belief in future life or immortality are not essentials

of religion, although these are 'very general elements', and does not find these to be universal. He cites Buddhism as a religion where there is no mention of God and he finds in Buddhism an attempt 'to escape continued existence and not to achieve it'. Some primitive peoples, he states, have no belief at all in life after death and they think in terms of 'impersonal sacred forces permeating nature' and have no conception of personal gods. Malinowski, on the other hand, believing as he does that faith in God and immortality are essential elements in religion and that religion has existed from the beginning, finds in Animism 'the belief in the human soul and in its survival after death'. He finds in the rites performed by the so-called savage people when one of their clan is approaching death, a definite belief in immortality, and he thinks that 'the dying man is immersed in an atmosphere of affirmation' and is 'steeped in immortality'. It is evident that the different estimates of Professor Huxley and Professor Malinowski are due to the fact that while the latter is satisfied with the rudiments or small beginnings for the affirmation of his thesis, the former is demanding a very strict standard and is content with nothing short of the fully developed idea. It is interesting to note that while Professor Julian Huxley finds no God in the impersonal *sacred* forces believed in by primitive people, Professor Malinowski finds it demonstrated in his convincing glimpses into the drama of primitive life that "the two main sources of religious inspiration are the desire for immortality and a craving for communication with God".

The religious practices and ceremonies differ widely in different religions, and if we understand that the teaching of comparative religion is to dismiss the varying elements and to isolate the common elements only as essential, there will be the danger of leaving out almost everything valuable to religion. It is true that the practices and the ceremonies form only the outer husk and are very far removed from the inner core of religion but it is also to be remembered that it is not possible to reach to the core without breaking the hard crust that lies in the surface. One must pass through the rites and ceremonies, the rituals and the practices, before one can hope to find the rich experience which has been

sought to be embodied in them. Almost every religious practice has some meaning in its own context and before dismissing it as useless superstition one should think twice and seek to find carefully whether it contains any real meaning or valuable suggestion.

I think I have made it sufficiently clear that I am not advocating the dangerous method of making facts suit theories when I hold that the facts collected by the science of religion should be interpreted by reference to the wider ends of philosophy and religion. The facts are expected to reveal their true purpose and character only when these are viewed in relation to the whole. Isolated facts dissociated from the context are very liable to be misunderstood and misinterpreted and although the importance of facts should never be minimised in formulating theories it should also be borne in mind that it is not mere collection of facts but their assimilation and interpretation, the right understanding of their value and significance, that is of utmost importance. The failure to lay proper emphasis on this aspect is responsible in large measure for the want of any phenomenal success in the field of the Science of Religion which it would otherwise have attained. A complete severance of Comparative Religion and Philosophy of Religion is inadmissible and instead of attempting to supplement and correct the independent conclusions of the one by those of the other, the two studies should not be kept apart but blended more intimately so that the study of theory and practice may be taken up together. The philosophical theory based on facts and the facts interpreted in reference to the whole system are expected to yield more fruitful results than has hitherto been achieved.

The word 'Religion' has been used in so many senses that it is difficult to formulate any definition which will be applicable to all of them. The religious spirit, again, has expressed itself differently at different periods of time and different levels of culture, and it is not easy to find out the essential element underlying the widely different expressions. A scientfic study of religion has become difficult because of the wide variety of the meanings of the term and also because of the immense development of the conception of religion in course of ages. It seems a long distance to pass from

apparently unmeaning and superstitious practices and observances with which religion was identified in the early ages and is still identified by some people belonging to a low level of civilisation and culture to the sublime experience of the mystic in the inmost recesses of the soul where he is not disturbed by anything external and is perfectly and blessedly 'alone' enjoying supreme peace and happiness. A proper adjustment is to be made between the external and the internal, and their correct evaluation is necessary in the scientific study of religion. It is interesting to note in this connection the broad meaning of 'Dharma', the Indian term for religion. It comes from the root *dhṛ* which means 'to hold' and includes everything necessary for the all-round development of the individual. One's basic mould or pattern determines one's Dharma and the duties attached to the stage of progress attained and signified by the individual constitute his 'Svadharma', his special sphere of action in the scheme of the universe. The performance of the duties of his station makes the individual fit for the next higher stage. The moral codes, social customs and usages, religious ceremonies and practices, worship of God, prayer and meditation are all included in 'Dharma'.

It is painful to find that even with the best of intentions distinguished men of learning have failed to find out the distinctive character of religious consciousness. L. P. Jacks, for example, thinks that whereas the scientific man is endowed with a keen sense of the difference between truth and falsehood, the religious man 'is endowed with a keen and persistent sense of the difference between good and evil'.[1] Although he admits that the former is not blind to the distinction between the good and the evil and that the latter also is not blind to the difference between truth and falsehood, he thinks there is a conflict of rival emphasis between the two and that the man of religion is not 'as attentive as he ought to be to the value represented by the difference between truth and error'. This is a glaring instance of the sad dissociation between Truth and Goodness. If Religion is not seeking Absolute Truth which gives abiding satisfaction to the entire dimensions of the soul, if the whole self does not surrender

[1] *Religion and Science—A Symposium*, p. 169.

itself to the ultimate Reality which is the personification and embodiment of all our ideals,—intellectual, aesthetic and moral, if there is still the feeling that only one part of our nature, *viz.*, the moral, has found satisfaction and that the other parts have remained unfulfilled, certanly it is a poor conception of religion and religious consciousness. It is difficult to understand how Dr. Jacks would distinguish between morality and religion, if the latter gives emphasis only to Goodness and not to Truth as well. Religion may be the extension and culmination of morality but is not to be identified with and limited to morality. It is only when the Good, as we have indicated earlier, appears also as supreme Beauty and as supreme Truth that morality passes into religion. Dr. Jacks's statement, though untrue, is, however, useful in bringing out clearly one aspect of the distinctive character of religious consciousness. That a dissociation between Truth and Goodness is conceived to be possible by such a distinguished man of learning shows that there is still the necessity for proclaiming that religion is not to be identified with the pursuit of any of the ideals in isolation but that it is what gives satisfaction to the entire self and is not content with any piecemeal attainment. It is not to be supposed that the Absolute which Religion seeks is a mere aggregation of the three values—Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The three values represent three different ways of approach to the Absolute. Logic, Aesthetics and Ethics are three altogether different sciences dealing with different aspects of Reality. Religion is not Logic, Aesthetics and Ethics put together and is something very different from any or all of them. The Absolute spirit which is the object of religion transcends Truth, Beauty and Goodness and the realisation of the Absolute, that is, the spiritual consciousness, is something very different from mere intellectual pursuit of truth or appreciation of beauty or cultivation of moral qualities. The modern emphasis on values and the attempt to identify God with either one of these values or with their aggregate have resulted in clouding the true character of religion rather than revealing it. It is true, as Professor Haldane says, that we find the revelation of God 'in our active ideals of truth, right, charity and beauty and consequent fellowship with others, but it is to be asked

seriously whether these are to be regarded as the whole of religion or as mere preparations for the Great Revelation. I am not speaking of any historical revelation but of the deep experience within when the finite spirit recognises and realises his own self in the Absolute and exclaims:

> "Who has felt the spirit of the Highest
> Cannot confound nor doubt Him, nor deny;
> Yea, with one voice, O world tho' thou deniest,
> Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

This passionate conviction expresses a personal contact with the Absolute which is of the essence of religion and is much above the mere pursuing of an ideal. God is the embodiment of the ideals; God reveals Himself through these ideals, it is true, but it is never to be forgotten that God also transcends these ideals. The distinction between the ideal and the actual has sometimes been supposed to bring out the difference between morality and other values on the one hand and religion, on the other. Religion has been regarded as 'anticipated attainment' and as concerned with what is already accomplished as distinguished from what is to be accomplished through the process of time. But even this distinction does not bring out the real point. There is a conversion of the soul that is effected by the transcendent experience. A new consciousness arises and there is a thorough re-orientation of values. The sense of something permanent, something abiding, something beginningless and endless, something above space and time, something above the chain of causes and effects, something beyond phenomenal existence, something that proclaims and establishes its worth directly and shows the worthlessness of all other things by contrast, something that reveals itself as the identity of thought and being, is the predominating element in the religious consciousness, and the experience once attained permeates and transforms the whole life of the individual. The difference between the moral life which seeks to regulate every action taken severally by reference to the ideal and the religious life in which actions follow from the source of all goodness spontaneously and automatically becomes evident as soon as the ideal is replaced by or rather consummated in the living personality of God.

Religion, in a very wide sense of the term, may certainly be described as 'Loyality' to a great cause as has been done by Josiah Royce or as the 'Single-minded pursuit of what appears to be right, charitable, true and beautiful' as has been done by Professor J. S. Haldane, and these statements undoubtedly express much that is significant and is of real worth in religion. But there is a danger in thus widening the meaning of religion. Much atheism has sometimes lurked behind many noble sentiments, and although there is no reason to suspect any trace of atheism in Royce or in Haldane, who are deeply religious souls, instances are not rare when nature has been substituted for God and the worship of Nature has been regarded as virtually the worship of God, and science, being the pursuit of truth, has been identified with Religion, although it has unmistakably denied the existence of the Absolute spirit. There have been many, again, who have expressed the moral sentiment nobly and beautifully but they recognise nothing beyond Goodness and virtually deny the existence of any religion beyond morality. There have been, again, advocates of Value Philosophy who have said many good words but who believe only in a Deity that is still to emerge and a God who is in the making. There is no longer any use mincing matters and it should be declared unequivocably that Religion believes in the existence of the Absolute spirit as the ultimate Reality and as the source and sustainer of the universe and also that this Reality is not only realisable but is actually realised by human beings at a certain stage of their development and that nothing short of this should be called religion.

LECTURE II

Objections considered

The modern age is pre-eminently the age of science and the prevailing notion is that in this age of enlightenment and culture, of progress and development, of freedom and democracy, religion, which stands for narrow conservatism, has no place. It seems fashionable to say that religion is an exploded myth and is not to be taken seriously. Although it is true that the old conflict between science and religion no longer exists in the same form and intensity as before and although great hopes are being expressed that the time is perhaps not far off when there would be a happy blending of the two and each would take lessons from the other and correct its own defects, it is doubtful whether there is any reasonable ground for this high optimism. The symposium held in Great Britain in 1930 is a very valuable document showing the attitude of eminent churchmen, eminent scientists and eminent philosophers towards the problem of the relation between science and religion. It cannot be denied that there is not only no heat in the discussions but there is, on the other hand, a note of harmony. It is undoubtedly a matter of congratulation when we find Julian Huxley saying that *both* 'the scientific and the religious spirit are of the utmost value' and admitting that science is 'simply *one* way of handling the chaos of experience' or J. S. Haldane declaring that the final picture is 'of God as the only reality, eternally present, and eternally creative' or Sir Arthur Eddington saying that he thinks that human reasoning 'can be nothing less than a ray proceeding from the light of absolute truth, a thought proceeding from the absolute Mind'. These are certainly instances of great scientists having a glimpse of something beyond the clear-cut conclusions of science reached through its method of 'abstraction and codifying'. There is nothing but sincerity when Sir Arthur Eddington says that the science of Ethics reduces 'God to something like an ethical code' and that Psychology 'seems to remove from the con-

ception of God every attitude that calls forth our worship or love' and advises the earnest seeker of religion to hold fast to his intimate religious *experience* which will take him closer to the ultimate truth than codifying and symbolising can reach. But it is to be remembered that these words express merely the personal beliefs and opinions of the scientists and not the position of science or the relation between science and religion. Julian Huxley is careful to point out at the very outset of his lecture that there he was not thinking of himself 'as a representative of science' but only wanted 'to talk as a human being', and Bertrand Russell, who evidently was dissatisfied with the authorities of the B. B. C. for not being included in the list of speakers and found consolation in the supposition that outspoken opponents of religion were not included since they would have pained the more orthodox among the listeners, fails to find in Professor Huxley's address any support for even 'the most shadowy orthodoxy'. Sir Arthur Eddington frankly admits that if he says anything positive as to what must be put into the skeleton scheme of symbols reached by science, it is *not* as a scientist that he claims to speak. When Malinowski says that he 'is unable to accept any positive religion' and cannot 'positively believe in Providence in any sense of the word' and that he has 'no conviction of personal immortality' and when Father O' Hara declares that there is 'greater certainty of the truths of revelation' than of the truths of science, and when Alexander says plainly that he does not follow Sir Arthur Eddington because the latter 'holds God and mind to be more directly known than physical things, and even thinks that mind which we know directly must be treated as the ultimate character of things' and because the latter gives wrong reasons for his conclusions, and sums up the whole position of his system of philosophy by asking the question, 'And what becomes of all our creeds and our theologies, and how can we worship or love God *not realised but still to come*?'[2], it is difficult to close one's eyes and keep oneself comfortable with the idea of even that unanimity that is supposed by Bertrand Russell to be 'a

[1] *Religion and Science—A Symposium*, p. 137.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

unanimity about the authorities who control the B. B. C."[1] rather than one about science and religion. It only seems that we have become more gentlemanly in our bahaviour and do not take pleasure in saying things rudely rather than that we have discovered the real basis of reconciliation leaving no room for conflict. If the common man does not now engage himself much in the conflict, it is more because he is wanting in religious fervour and it does not matter much to him whether religion lives or dies and not because of his expanded vision due to the progress of science or of religious outlook. As to the real position, we are very much where we were and we become disillusioned of our optimism as soon as we think of the popularity of Bertrand Russell or of Sigmund Freud or of Karl Marx.

The real attitude of science towards religion becomes manifest in the following words of Bertrand Russell: "From a scientific point of view we can make no distinction between the man who eats little and sees heaven and the man who drinks much and sees snakes." This is the conclusion he arrives at after a full discussion of the problem as to whether there is available, in support of religion, a source of knowledge which lies outside scientific attitude and that his verdict is no less impartial than that of the men of the jury in a law-court. The above statement which finds no difference between religious experience and the hallucination of the drunkard or of the opium-eater or 'the intoxication produced by laughing gas' deserves a careful scrutiny, coming as it does from no less a person than the author of *Principia Mathematica*, although subsequently he has said many unsupportable things and constantly changed his philosophical position, which has deprived him of his once exalted position.

Bertrand Russell puts the issue nicely and sums up admirably the position of the upholder of the cause of religion when he says in the beginning of the discussion, "We believe the man who has seen things through the telescope that we have never seen; why, then, they ask, should we not believe them when they report things that are to them equally unquestionable?" But as he advances in the discussion and

[1] *Religion and Science—A Symposium*, p. 174.

finds his position precarious, he has no hesitation in introducing irrelevant topics which show his clear confusion of issues and in making statements which are hardly deserved in the mouth of one who professes to deal with the subject in the truly scientific spirit.

He puts the case of the scientist clearly and shows his difficulty in accepting the truth of religious experience when he says, " when a man of science tells us the result of an experiment, he also tells us how the experiment was performed; others can repeat it, and if the result is not confirmed it is not accepted as true; but many men might put themselves into the situation in which the mystic's vision occurred without obtaining the same revelation." This certainly describes the crux of the whole problem, but is Mr. Russell sure that it is so easy to place oneself ' *into the situation in which the mystic's vision occurred?*' If somebody tells him that he places himself in the situation in which Mr. Russell works out his mathematical sums and discovers the mathematical principles but cannot have the solution of the problems or the discovery of the principles, would he be prepared to give up the truth of his own revelations? The situation, as ordinarily seen, is nothing more than a silent atmosphere, a well-ventilated spacious room, a piece of paper and a pen or a pencil, but the situation or rather the mood in which the mathematical problem finds its solution involves much more than can be observed externally or described in language. Russell, as an ultra-behaviorist may, of course, deny the existence of mind or consciousness, but he cannot vouchsafe, I believe, that the brain-cells in the two cases were arranged *exactly* in the same manner. The state of mind, or rather the arrangement of brain-matter, in Mr. Russell's view, in which a scientific law is discovered or a mathematical problem is solved, can hardly be given to another man for experimenting as to whether the discovery or the solution comes to him in that state. It is something finer than the adjustment of the telescope or arranging conditions for a physical experiment. The experience of the mystic which is supposed to be belonging to even a higher stage than that of mere intellectual illumination cannot be subjected to the test of physical experiment because the nature of its subject-matter does not allow it and

not because of its untruth. If the same result does not follow because the same conditions are not and cannot be given, is it not most unscientific to dismiss the happening as mere hallucination and regard this as evidence of failure of any necessary connection between the event and the supposed cause? It is interesting to note that what Russell considers to be its weak point is regarded by mysticism as its strength and the mystics lay great stress on this very aspect of the problem and hold that the proof of religion is experimental. Any person who is anxious to have the experience and is ready to pass through the necessary discipline and thus make himself fit for it, we are told, will have the mystic illumination. His own experience will prove to him the truth of mysticism and he will not have to rely on other men's testimony. The mystic invites persons to undertake the experiment and test its truth for themselves and is only too willing to accept the challenge of Mr. Russell. But it is only fair that the experiment should be conducted under proper and suitable conditions and a vague statement such as the one we are considering, *viz.*, that many men put themselves in the situation in which the mystic's vision occurred, hardly befits a scientist of Mr. Russell's calibre. Russell knows that there is 'a definite physical discipline called Yoga, which is practised in order to produce the mystic's certainty and which is recommended with much confidence by those who have tried it' and is even generous enough to suppose that after breathing in a certain way for a certain time, 'we may have ourselves experienced a state of mind such as they describe'. But his difficulty is that after returning to our normal mode of respiration we are not quite sure whether the vision was to be believed. How does Mr. Russell know what happens after having returned to the normal mode of respiration? Is it his own experience or does he learn it from the testimony of the mystics or from that of the beginners? The mystics say with one voice that the conviction and certainty that attaches itself to the experience is so strong and so marked a feature of the experience that it is never lost and that it entirely re-models one's life. It cannot thus be accepted as the testimony of the mystic, and if it is the experience of the neophyte that he is not *quite sure*, he may reasonably hope for a greater certainty when

he becomes an adept. If, however, the vision that follows the breathing exercises fortunately be the experience of the sceptic, Russell himself, it goes a great way in flatly contradicting his previous statement that a man might put himself in the situation in which the mystic vision occurred without obtaining the same revelation.

It is difficult to understand Russell's real meaning through his alternate fits of generosity and rudeness. He has no hesitation in saying that there is a core of wisdom in the doctrine of mysticism, that the mystic emotion may give something of very great value, that 'breadth and calm and profundity may all have their source in this emotion', that 'the philosophy based upon mysticism has a great tradition from Parmenides to Hegel' and at the same breath also holding that the assertions of mysticism are inessential and that 'there is no reason to believe them true', and that there is no distinction from the scientific point of view between the vision of the mystic and the hallucinatory images of the drunkard. He says that the mystic vision is an abnormal perception and that in abnormal perception there is no reason to expect any correspondence with fact and he does not 'admit any method of arriving at truth except that of science'. He understands that 'in some sense and on some occasions, it is important to conceive the universe as a whole' and that 'when so conceived all process is within one completed whole, past, present and future, all exist, in some sense together, and the present does not have that pre-eminent reality which it has to our usual ways of apprehending the world'; yet, the mystic view of unreality of time, if true, puts, according to him, 'an end not only to science but to prudence, hope and effort, but it is incompatible with worldly wisdom and—what is more important to religion—with morality'. Are these not evident indications of a puzzled mind finding itself helpless before the superior position of the opponent and desperately attempting to defend a lost cause?

Russell admits that there is some amount of unanimity amongst the mystics and quotes Dean Inge on the point, "I know nothing more remarkable than the unanimity of the mystics, ancient, mediaeval and modern, Protestant, Catholic and even Buddhist or Mohammedan." He also gives the

substance of their agreement and points out that all of them hold that (1) division and separateness are unreal, (2) evil is illusory and (3) time is unreal. But he thinks that the unanimity is only partial as all of them agree up to a point but disagree totally when that point is passed. He cites as instances that Catholics but not Protestants have visions in which Virgin Mary appears and that the Chinese mystics of the Tao regard all government as bad while European and Mohammadan mystics urge submission to constituted authority. It seems ludicrous that Russell should be relying on these insignificant details which are altogether irrelevant to the sublime revelation of mysticism in order to prove the '*total*' disagreement of the mystics. It does not require any argument to show that the topics referred to belong to a lower level where associations and surroundings still play a large part and as such cannot belie the higher experiences of the deepest recesses of the mind where there is supreme silence, sublime stillness and undisturbed harmony and peace, and which being 'the flight of the Alone to the Alone' has no chance of being mutilated by the so-called visions which Russell refers to. As a scientific man Russell ought to have busied himself with the explanation of the astonishing unanimity of the specifically mystic experience rather than having contented himself with noticing minor differences here and there. The business of science is to find out unity amidst diversity, to reduce multiplicity to unity, to discover uniformities underlying differences, and it is bad science which shakes off its responsibility by deliberately ignoring unanimity and confining its attention to difference alone. The Great mystic experience is very much the same everywhere and it knows no difference of climes or ages, and this fact calls for an explanation. He is a poor scientist whose only weapon consists in declaring an experience which he cannot explain to be nothing more than a hallucination. There is nothing more unscientific in a scientist than the dogmatic attitude and if this had characterised all the scientists, the doors of all explanation and discovery would have been closed for ever. Russell complains that the mystic cannot arrange like the scientist any microscope or telescope or such other things when he wishes others to see what he has

seen and this gives him the conclusive reason for not accepting the testimony of the mystics inspite of their certainty and partial unanimity. But we should remember the words of William James that "there may be a wider world as unseen by us as our world is by a dog; and to believe in that world may be the most essential function that our lives in this world have to perform." The atom and the electron have not been seen by anybody with the microscope or the telescope; but are these to be dismissed merely on that ground? If we are to accept them because the eye of reason, though not the physical eye, sees them, what ground is there for rejecting what appears to best intellects to be rational? When Einstein says, "A knowledge of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, of the manifestations of the profoundest and the most radiant beauty which are only accessible to our reason in their most elementary forms—it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitutes the truly religious attitude", or when Sir Arthur Eddington declares that "the idea of a universal mind or logos, would be, I think, a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory; at least it is in harmony with it ", or when Sir James Jeans says that the universe seems to him 'to be nearer to a great thought than to a great machine', it seems that a man who believes in nothing more than mechanism and regards all higher deliverences to be illusory and thinks that there is nothing rational in the interpretation of the world by higher categories is deliberately allowing himself to live in a fool's paradise. If the atom or the electron fully justifies belief in its existence by confirmation in the facts which are expected to follow from the supposition, and if this verification is regarded as the most satisfactory test of hypotheses, does not the mystic experience, satisfy this test? The mystic after his great experience is not the same man he was before. His whole life has been changed for the better. He is now filled with universal love and he engages his whole soul in doing good to others, to all the creatures of the world. All his selfish desires are gone and he finds his self in all. It is a mistake to suppose that the mystic lives alone and desires only his own individual salvation. The Hindu mystic, against whom this charge has been levelled in particular, has

been misunderstood entirely. There is no distinction for him between the self and the not-self, as he realises everything to be his own self when he attains the right vision and gains the correct knowledge, '*yatra tu sarvamatmaivābhūt*', when everything becomes identified with his self, is the sacred text which describes the stage of realisation. He becomes '*sarvabhūtahite ratah*', absolutely engaged in doing good to all creatures, and he becomes '*sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā*', that is he identifies his self with that of all creatures. He cannot do harm to anybody because nobody is an 'other' to him, and no one can injure his own self. This realisation of the absolute self, which is seen to be the only reality, the one self that permeates all, gives the real rationale of the doctrine of *Ahimsā* (Non-violence) which has been emphasised by the Jaina and the Buddhist. Because it is the one self everywhere and there is no not-self, there cannot be any possibility or even a thought of *himsā* or injury at this stage of realisation. Does not the whole conduct of the mystic who has been blessed with the Great illumination prove that he has realised the universal Mind which is all Love and has been in unmistakable contact with It and has received the inexhaustible flow of love from It? Do not the words of the mystic, sometimes illiterate or with only rudimentary learning, conveying important truths and solving difficult philosophical problems which only men of light and learning can hope to do, unmistakably show that the mystic mind has been in contact with the source of all light and of all knowledge? Does the conduct of the mystic warrant Russell's conclusion that he only perceives hallucinations and do his dealings justify the estimate that he is abnormal and pathological? As the facts are directly against what are to expected from the hypothesis, there is no rational ground for maintaining it. Their single-minded devotion to truth and the absolute purity of their moral lives give the direct lie to Russell's conclusion that the mystics are pursuing a will-o-the wisp. Whitehead rightly remarks: "Religion is a system of general truths *which have the effect of transforming character* when they are sincerely held and *vividly apprehended.*" The whole subsequent life of the mystic is directed towards realisation of the ideal which he has vividly apprehended and knows no rest

until he has transformed, or at least approximated, himself to the reality which he has felt so deeply and which he has recognised to be his own essence and his higher self.

Russell thinks that he has been able to find out the whole truth about mysticism when he says, that it "expresses an emotion, not a fact." It is difficult to understand why Russell regards this as a concession to the mystics and thinks that this position ' while, admitting something of their claim, is not repugnant to the scientific intelligence'. If it means that the emotion is not aroused by any objective reality, if it has no basis in fact, if the perception of God is nothing better than a hallucination, Russell's concession means nothing and he only deceives himself and his readers by this camouflage. If, on the other hand, it means that the reality experienced by the mystics is something different from what he and his fellow-workers are acquainted and concerned with, and if he wants to remain contented with the supposition that the assertions of the mystics do not interfere with the position of science dealing with matter and motion, if by 'fact' he means only the physical fact, and if by 'emotion', he means the attitude of the mind when it is in contact with anything higher than the physical fact, Russell goes a great way towards the reconciliation of science and religion. The mother's love or affection for her child is certainly an emotion but is it thereby not a fact? Is the mother's love a hallucination simply because none but the mother experiences it, and however one might attempt to put oneself in the same situation without being a mother, one would fail to have the same experience? Is there any meaning in saying that it is an emotion and not a fact except in the sense referred to above? It is certainly not a physical fact observable by the physical eye or by the telescope and the microscope, but its presence and its reality cannot on that account be denied. The mystic feels unspeakable joy, inexpressible bliss, an indescribable state of fulfilment, and this feeling is certainly an emotion, but does it take away the character of reality from what he has seen and experienced clearly and vividly? If the issue is to decide the reality or otherwise of what is experienced by the mystic, it is mere confusion or avoidance of issues to declare that mystictism is an emotion, not a fact. If nothing in

reality corresponds to the experience, if it is a subjective experience having no basis in reality, it is to be unambiguously declared a hallucination. If, on the other hand, it is a clear and vivid experience of reality which not only rouses noble emotions and sublime sentiments but also unmistakably manifests its reality through its effects of transforming character and setting up new values in life, if the experience is coherent with all the other experiences and if it also satisfies the practical test, it is nothing short of dogmatism to say that the mystic experience is not a fact. Descartes lays great emphasis on the clearness and distinctness of experience and regards it as the supreme criterion of the truth of the highest ideas, and Descartes is no emotional mystic but a mathematician like Russell himself. Spinoza, in whom the light of reason kindled more brilliantly than in any other and who is regarded as the philosopher who was never guided by any other consideration than that of the cold intellect, cannot surely be dismissed as an emotionalist when he gives the highest place to *Intuitio* or the knowledge derived from the consummated stage of intellect and reason where things are seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, and assigns the lowest place to *Imaginatio* or the knowledge derived from the senses, by which alone Russell swears and which only is fact according to him. Plato, the greatest name in the history of philosophy, also unhesitatingly declares sense-information to be mere 'opinion' as distinguished from real 'knowledge'. If the philosophy based upon mysticism has, by Russell's own admission, a great tradition from Parmenides to Hegel, if so many of the great philosophers in the world have believed in mystic experience and have built their philosophy on it, is it not irrational to suppose that all those upholders of reason have supported what is against all reason? Russell's statement, 'Mysticism is an emotion, not a fact', if it is to be given any sense at all, is to be taken as a frank admission that the subject-matter of mysticism transcends physics and that it is not within the competence of science to discuss the value and validity of the mystic experience.

There is a great similarity between the views of Bertrand Russell and those of Sigmund Freud who, along with Karl Marx, may be regarded as the idol of the modern youngman.

The secret of the popularity of these three seems to lie in their unequivocal opposition to religion and it is because of this fact that I have thought it almost obligatory to examine at some length their views, which are dominating modern minds and which are responsible more than anything else for their deplorable indifference to all matters concerning religion, before any useful purpose can be served by bringing out the essentials of religion from its comparative study. The professed aim of all of them is to introduce a new society where unrestricted freedom (which is only another name for license) may have its full play and for the preparation of the ground of which all the so-called absolute values—God and Morality, Truth and Goodness—at least the capital letters, which have stood in the way of the free exercise of reason and will—require to be banished for ever from human society. It is only natural that the modern degenerate society, after the two great world wars and when a third seems to be impending should welcome theories proposing to cut at the root of all discipline and control and thereby dismissing the truth of the stings of conscience attendant on violations of moral principles and religious commandments and should worship the deliverers who want to make man 'unrestrictedly happy by abolishing the restrictions imposed by culture'.

Freud openly declares that the religious dogmas "are not the residue of experience or the final result of reflection : they are illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, strongest and most insistent wishes of mankind; the secret of their strength is the strength of these wishes",[1] and he deserves considerable thanks for the clarity of his expressions and giving out his views unambiguously leaving no room for misunderstanding by his readers. He distinguishes clearly between an 'error' and an 'illusion' and says that an illusion is not necessarily an error. It is characteristic of an illusion that it is derived from men's wishes and in this respect it approaches the psychiatric delusion, although it is to be remembered that the illusion is not like the delusion necessarily false and incompatible with reality. It is possible that the illusion of a poor girl that a prince will come and take her home may actually be realised in

[1] *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 52.

reality, there is nothing in it that is unrealisable or incompatible with reality. The 'wish-fulfilment', and not the relation to reality, is the most important point and a belief is to be called an illusion 'when wish-fulfilment is a prominent factor in its motivation'. The rich store of religious ideals is born of the need to make tolerable the helplessness of man and is intended to protect him on the one hand against the rude workings of nature which seem to defy all human control, the terrible earthquakes, the devastating floods, the sweeping storms, the painful diseases and the all-ending death, and against the evils of human society itself on the other. Just as the child clings to its father for protection against the dangers known to it at that age, so the child of the human society has its father-longing and conceives of God as the benevolent father who, though apparently severe, is watching us carefully in all our difficulties and will not allow us to become the plaything of the stark and pitiless forces of nature and will help us to pass through all trials and tribulations. Death is regarded not as extinction and annihilation of all existence but only as the step towards a new and a higher existence. The life after death which is a continuation of this earthly existence brings 'all the perfection that perhaps we have missed here' and there all good is rewarded and all evil punished, which remained to be done in this life. The terrors and hardships, the miseries and the sufferings are sought to be obliterated by means of the comfortable idea that whatever is ordained by Providence is good and though we may not always understand it is in the long run to our advantage. Freud thus finds the 'father nucleus' hidden behind every divine figure and while admitting that religious ideas are prized as the most precious gift of culture and as the most valuable of the human possessions traces all of them to wish-fulfilment as their origin.

Freud takes as his task the psychological analysis of religious ideas and is content with merely saying that they are all illusions, all derived from men's wishes. He has the frankness to admit that he as a psychologist cannot judge their reality value. They do not admit of proof. "Just as they cannot be proved neither can they be refuted." Freud gives vent to his admirable scientific attitude when he says

that we still know too little to approach the religious ideas critically and that science can as yet give no answer to many questions. He therefore does not, like Russell, dogmatically proceed to estimate the value of religious doctrines from the point of view of physical science but recognises that the enquiry as to the value and validity of religious ideas lies beyond the scope of science. If this expresses the real attitude of Freud towards religion we have nothing to complain against him. If he confines himself to the boundaries of the particular department of his enquiry and proposes a hypothesis suggested by his able analysis, it does not affect religion. But when he is led further by his instinct and gives up not only what he has admitted from the pressure of reason but also his rational attitude, his real meaning becomes manifest and it is difficult to allow him to pass unchallenged.

Freud says that the estimating of the value of religious doctrines as truth does not lie within the scope of his enquiry but at the same breath takes up the enquiry and says that religious doctrines are absurd if they lie beyond reason. There is no appeal beyond reason and "if the truth of religious doctrines is dependent on an inner experience which bears witness to that truth, what is one to make of the many people who do not have that rare experience?" "Of what significance is it for other people that you have won from a state of ecstasy, which has deeply moved you, an imperishable conviction of the real truth of the doctrines of religion?" "It is merely illusion", he says, "to expect anything from intuition or trance; they can give us nothing but particulars which are difficult to interpret." "It would be very nice if there were a God, who was both creator of the world and a benevolent providence, if there were a moral world order and a future life, but at the same time it is very odd that this is all just as we should wish it ourselves. And it would be still odder if our poor ignorant enslaved ancestors had succeeded in solving all these difficult riddles of the universe."[1] Are not these utterances evident indications that Freud with all his feigned advocacy for the supremacy of reason and freedom from the burden of religious doctrines is attempting to evade

[1] *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 58.

reason and make his wish take its place? Reason cannot disprove religious doctrines, he has previously said; now he thinks he disproves them and attempts to show that they are being disproved by reason, although there is not a jot of reason, nothing but his 'instinctual' disdain for everything religious behind the statement. In course of our criticism of the views of Bertrand Russell, we pointed out that the mystic experience is of value because of its universal character, because everybody treading the same path and attaining the same height, participates in that experience and corroborates the truth of the experiences of the mystics who have gone before him and that therefore, there is no justification for rejecting the value of the experience on the ground that others cannot have the experience. No experience, no experience higher than the perception of the table or of the chair, can be shared by all men, and if this be regarded as the criterion of truth, the certainty of even mathematical truths cannot be guaranteed. The untrained mind or the mind of the savage which cannot count beyond the number of his fingers is sure to look blank when calculus is presented to him. The mystic is not an insane man perceiving hallucinations which have no connection with reality, but his experiences are corroborated by others engaged in the same pursuit, and the wonderful similarity and agreement of the independent experiences of the seekers of truth, belonging to different ages, different lands and different nationalities, leave no room for doubting the objectivity of the experience. If clearness and distinctness of the experience and its coherence with and corroboration by other experiences, and its practical result in effecting a thorough conversion of the life of the person having the experience are no criteria of its truth and objectivity, according to Freud, he knows not what he says and is certainly demanding something impossible and wants to hang the dog after giving it a bad name. The great sage Yājñavalkya, in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, curses his opponent when the latter asks him to place Brahman or the Absolute Reality before all and show it to all, if he has really experienced it as he claims. It is an absurd proposal, Yājñavalkya says, and he tells him that his head would fall down severed from his body in proof of the impropriety of

the question. Russell and Freud are here asking the same impossible proof, the same evidence of the truth of the mystic experience. That which is not a physical fact, that which is not in space and time, that which transcends the division of the subject and the object and hence is not presentable as an object; that which can only be apprehended in an experience where the subject-object division has disappeared and has given place to an all-absorbing unity, that which is higher than the physical and the mental and is termed spirit, *Cit* or consciousness cannot be presented as an external fact to be observed by all with the physical eye, and if we are to reject everything that does not satisfy this test, the world of our knowledge would become limited to a few chairs and tables, houses and trees. The same test is not suitable to all orders of existence and it is a fallacy to attempt to interpret the higher order of reality by the help of a category that only applies to lower orders of existence. The thing may be still there without our noticing it, and it may be because the openings of our net are too wide for the purpose that we have failed to catch the fish and not because of its absence. The nature of the experience, the objectivity of which is disputed, is to be taken into account and it is to be remembered that for higher experiences it is their suggestivity and value as transforming agents and not their reference to external objects that is of supreme importance. Sir Arthur Eddington perhaps hints at this and knows better than Freud and Russell when he says that "the operation of cutting out illusion in the spiritual domain requires a delicate surgical knife, and the only instrument that I, a physicist, can manipulate is a bludgeon which, it is true, crushes illusion but at the same time crushes everything of non-material significance and even reduces the material world to a state of uncreatedness."[1]

It is interesting to note how Freud forgets his definition of illusion given in the beginning, *viz.*, that it need not be necessarily false and that it is not incompatible with reality and proceeds towards the end of his book to argue that religion is false simply because it is an illusion. Granting for argu-

[1] *Religion and Science*: A Symposium, p. 130.

ment's sake that God is represented in religion as the Father who protects us from dangers and benevolently helps us in all our difficulties and even that this representation is just as we wish it to be, is it any argument to hold that it is not a true representation simply because we have wished it? I may wish very much that my supper may be ready by the time I reach home, and if actually I find my supper ready on reaching home, am I to throw the dishes away thinking them to be hallucinatory content which has wish-fulfilment as its basis? The prophet of anti-repression runs the risk of being disobeyed if he recommends this repression, and the popularity which his theory has gained by preaching against discipline is sure to be lost if this prohibition follows from his doctrine. The God that Religion pictures may or may not be real: He may be nothing more than mere wish-fulfilment or He may be actually the ultimate Reality what He is supposed to be; this much only comes from the analysis. But how does Freud pass from the alternative possibility to its decisive truth? Does he take care to find out the crucial instance that decides between the alternative hypotheses? The mystic finds the crucial point in his convincing experience of the Godhead and in the transforming effects of the experience on his character. He declares that God is no mere wish-fulfilment because he has not only felt His presence but also because all other facts in the universe and in his life are in perfect harmony with the experience. But is there anything in support of Freud when he passes from 'it *may not* be true' to 'it *is not* true', excepting his own wish? The great defect of mechanism lies in supposing that it has been able to overthrow the worth or value of a thing when it has been able to analyse its contents. The value-judgement is not superseded by the natural or the physical explanation, and Freud is more consistent and reasonable when he regards the question of the value of religion to be outside the scope of his enquiry than when he is bent on overthrowing it. The clarity and force of Freud's writings and the ability with which he carries on the analysis and conceals the gaps in his steps, would really have meant a great menace to religion and culture, had he not, fortunately for us all in the world, referred everything ultimately to

sex-repression and found in it the explanation of all problems and prescribed the same recipe for all diseases. It is not long before careful observers find out the complex working in the author himself and cease to have faith in his guidance. When two thousand millions of human beings all over the terrestrial globe believe in some sort of religion or other, it is certainly pathological to suggest that they are all under the influence of illusion or at least are guided by those under illusion and that culture and civilisation have been retarded by religion and that the only hope lies in its prohibition.

The popularity of Karl Marx is due to his graphic description of the modern industrialist society and of the inevitable hard lot of the poor wage-earners in such a society. Nobody can miss in his writings the deep sympathy which he feels for the wage-earner and his whole-hearted devotion to the amelioration of his miserable condition. It is no wonder that in the society overridden by capitalism he should be worshipped as the saviour of poor people and that his 'Das Kapital' should be called "The Workingman's Bible". He observes facts carefully and all his conclusions are based on documentary evidence. His is a scientific mind which does not allow emotions to distort facts and is not afraid of drawing generalisations that follow from carefully observed facts.

We would not have been interested in the discussion of his doctrines, had Karl Marx been regarded only as a social worker and would have been only too glad to give him the respect he deserves and leave him alone. But the fact is that he is regarded not merely as the father of Socialism but also as a philosopher and reformer who has given the death-blow to all religion and all traditional metaphysics and it is believed that his Dialectic Materialism is the final word in philosophy. Many sincerely believe that Karl Marx has undermined the basis of religion to such an extent that unless he can be answered religion stands no chance.

There is not the least doubt that Marx is anxious to get rid of religion and is afraid of anything that might even remotely be of help and support to it. He dismisses metaphysics as 'intoxicated speculation' and distinguishes it from

'sober philosophy', and cannot bear any suggestion of Idealism which is connected with religion. He knows as well as his co-worker Engels that if one allows Idealism one cannot resist religion, and therefore he proclaims at the very outset that he welcomes Feuerbach chiefly because Feuerbach had resolutely broken away from Hegelian Idealism and had decidedly accepted Materialism. Marx wanted a radical change in society and was disgusted with theorising which could not bring about any real change in the existing conditions. In his celebrated Theses on Feuerbach, he says, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it." It is quite natural that in his eagerness for introducing radical changes in the social structure, he should find in the conservatism of religion the greatest impediment and should apply his whole soul to dismiss religion and thereby clear the ground in the sphere of his activity. If people are contented with their lot and take their suffering and misery to be an act of dispensation of the Good God and the All-wise Providence and attempt to adjust themselves to circumstances, however adverse and alien they may be, it would almost be impossible to rouse them to activity and prepare them for the great social revolution which Marx had envisaged, and Marx knew it very well. Marx was desiring an opposition to religion, and when Strauss's 'Life of Jesus' was published saying that the Biblical narratives were, in great part, not history but myths which were unintentional creations of the popular imagination and that the Son of God was not the single individual, Christ, but *Humanity* itself, he found in it a very welcome thing. But the influence of Hegel was still very great and his idealistic system was acting as an invaluable support to the conception of religion, and Marx was on the look out for a philosophy that could undermine Hegelian Idealism and thus cut at the very basis of religion. So when Feuerbach appeared on the scene with his "*Essence of Christianity*" and preached that sensible beings were alone true and real beings and that truth, reality and sensibility were identical, Marx found in the left-winged Hegelianism an open advocate of Materialism and had no hesitation in accepting this sworn enemy of Idealism as his master and guide. It served a good purpose.

Feuerbach called himself a Hegelian and attempted to draw his conclusions from the teachings of Hegel. It was the height of diplomacy to oppose Hegel in the name of Hegel, and as Hegel's influence was still enormous, there was no other way but to conceal the real opposition under the cloak of a superficial acceptance. Marx called his method Dialectical and termed his system Dialectical Materialism in order to give the semblance of accepting the Hegelian method. It cannot be denied that Hegel's teachings were to a certain extent responsible for the left-winged development. If the Absolute Idea manifests itself *necessarily* through nature, if the annulment and the division, the moment of Negation, is a necessary step in the life of the Absolute, if there is, again, a going beyond or a negation of this moment of negation, if transcendence consists in annulment no less than in affirmation, there is every possibility that the transcendence should be lost sight of and only the immanence emphasised. If the Absolute bifurcates itself into the subject and the object, if the Infinite lives in and through the finite, if the finite is a *necessity* in the life of the Infinite, it is possible that the Infinite beyond the finite, the Infinite as transcending the finite may be lost sight of and it may be falsely identified with the finite. In his zeal for bringing the remote transcendent Infinite into relation with the finite and for showing the immanence of the Infinite in the finite, he has left the loophole of confusing the Infinite with the sum of the finites and of ignoring the transcendence of the Infinite altogether. Feuerbach actually sees no Absolute beyond Humanity, no Idea beyond sense, no Infinite beyond the finite. He also anticipates Freud by attempting a psychological explanation of the genesis of religion and thinking that the task of the philosopher is not to find out the reason in religion but only to unmask the illusion to which it owes its origin. In religion man merely objectifies his true essence and the Godhead is nothing but his own universal nature. "God is self objectified, the inner nature of man expressed; man is the beginning, the middle and the end of religion." The Hegelian statement that God comes to self-consciousness in man has to be reversed : self-consciousness is the Absolute and in God man knows himself only. The element of pantheism and the

conception of immanence of God in man and nature are not a little responsible for this misinterpretation and caricature of the philosophy of Hegel. From 'God is in Nature and Man', Feuerbach passes easily to 'God is nowhere else beyond Nature and Man'. It is interesting to note that Feuerbach is not only the inspirer of Marx but also the original of Freud. Does Freud say anything new when he analyses religion to be wish-fulfilment after Feuerbach's statement: "That which man himself is not, but wishes to be, that he represents to himself in his gods as existing; they are the wishes of man's heart transformed into real beings, his longing after happiness satisfied by the fancy. The world beyond is the present embellished and idealised by the fancy"?

Karl Marx found in Feuerbach all that he wanted,—an open denial of religion and a proclamation that it is nothing but illusion, a vehement opposition to Idealism, which is the hiding place of religion, and a firm faith in and avowed loyalty to materialism which is the sworn enemy of religion, and he accepted his discipleship fully whereby the pupil was relieved from the task of meeting the arguments of philosophers and theologians leaving that task to the master, and he could devote himself entirely to his main task, *viz.*, the examination of economic problems and attempting their solution. Marx accepts the dialectic method of Hegel meaning by it the onward march through opposition and contradiction and bases his whole economic theory on the triad of (1) private property of the worker, (2) expropriation of the labourer working for himself by the capitalist, (3) expropriation of the expropriator, the capitalist. He is satisfied with noticing that the germ of the antithesis lies in the thesis and that there is something inherent in the antithesis which moves it on to contradict and negate itself and lead on to the next higher stage. This continuous motion and change and development through opposition are taken by Marx to be the most important elements in the Dialectic and because he adopts this device for the explanation of development he has no hesitation to call his method dialectic. But he is eager to point out his difference from Hegel. "My dialectic", he says, "is not only different from the Hegelian but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain,

i.e., the process of thinking which under the name of the Idea he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world and the real world is only the external, the phenomenal form of The Idea; with me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought." Marx declares unequivocally that he regards Matter to be primary and as such is a materialist; those, on the other hand, who assert primacy of spirit over nature are idealists. He has the generosity to admit that Hegel is the first to present the general form of working of the dialectic in a comprehensive and conscious manner, but he finds in Hegel a mystification of the dialectic for which dialectic has suffered greatly. With Hegel, he thinks, dialectic is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again if one is to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell. Marx rejects Hegel's philosophy as 'drunken speculation' and praises Feuerbach for annihilating 'the dialectic of ideas'. He believes in 'dialectic of events', and not of 'ideas' and the science of history for him is the only science. Instead of starting from what men say, imagine or represent to themselves he wants to start from 'really acting men' and attempt to deduce from their actual life-powers the development of their ideological images. This sort of treating will, he believes, do away with the independence of 'morals, religion, metaphysics and other forms of ideology'. He is not satisfied in his later years even with the materialism of Feuerbach because the latter has not gone enough towards materialism. Although Feuerbach recognises nothing but sensations still he is a man who has never learned 'to approach the world of sensation without the eyes of the philosopher'. He fully realises that Feuerbach went as far as a theoriser could go without simply ceasing to be a theoriser and a philosopher, but he wants to do away with all theorising and substitute practical activity for it. He is a practical materialist who wants 'to revolutionise the existing world' and to effect this not through ideas or theory but through activity.

It is difficult to understand how a man who definitely disavows philosophy in these terms could be supposed to be a philosopher. The man who says, "The question whether

objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, *i.e.*, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of his thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question'', is not even the pragmatic philosopher emphasising the need for confirmation of theory in practice, but judged in the context of rejecting all interpretation and all theorising by philosophers and substituting interpretation by action, seems to be only a rebel and a revolutionary who not only has no faith in the existing social structure but also has none in reason whether individual or universal. If the deliverances of reason are not to be accepted as true, if nothing but what the senses show us has any value or validity, if morals, religion and metaphysics are all 'misty formations in the brains of men', if man is merely a slave of his economical conditions and if his only mission in life is to engage himself to better his material and economic conditions, philosophy has been given up unequivocally and the disciple of Feuerbach has only proved the truth of the pun, man is (ist) what he eats (isst).

A man who is not moved by any consideration of reason is difficult to be refuted. If the mere statement that the idealist is upside down and that the materialist is in the erect posture, is to be accepted simply because it dispenses with theorisings and promotes activities, it is an end of all philosophical discussion, and Marx is not anxious to retain it which is all 'drunken speculation'. Trotsky perhaps hints at the truth when he tells us that 'the will to revolutionary activity is a condition indispensable to understanding the Marxist dialectic'. It is the will to believe it that alone can show its reasonableness; it is a frank admission that there is no objective truth in the so-called philosophy of Marxism and that it can only appeal to persons actuated by a passion and striving for bringing about a revolutionary change.

It is not easy to understand the place assigned to action in Marxist philosophy. If socialism is to come inevitably due to the working of the dialectic, if capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction and is bound to lead to socialism, what are the followers of Marx to do for its emer-

gence? If it is a law, it comes as a matter of course; if it does not come naturally but requires the activity of the followers of Marxist philosophy of action, it is not a law that works spontaneously. If it is asserted that simultaneous human activity is a link in the process of causation and that the alternatives are not exhaustive, it has got to be admitted that philosophy of action, which believes in no theory but only in action is greatly undermined by a belief in a theory, a faith in the inevitability of a law discovered, once it is known that the action is merely the necessary manifestation of the law. Moreover, it is difficult to understand how Marx with all his denunciation of Hegelian idealism is himself professing it when he believes in a better state of society emerging as the result of the working of an inherent law. What Hegel's 'Absolute Idea' or the 'Time Spirit' stands for does not seem to be very different from what Marx has in mind. Bertrand Russell rightly says, "Marx professed himself an atheist, but retained a cosmic optimism which only theism could justify." The hope for a better social order which is to emerge in course of time following a law gives to his followers a support not unlike what the pious receive from their belief in God. Although Karl Marx has attempted to dismiss religion, fortunately for us he has not done it with any show of reason, but has given expression to his own feelings. Russell does not doubt the sincerity of Marx and says that he like others "believes in the *truth* of his own doctrines" and " does not regard them as nothing but an expression of the feelings natural to a rebellious middle class German Jew in the middle of the 19th century."

Marx does not seem to have noticed the inconsistency that underlies the supposition of socialism as the ideal state of things and his doctrine of the 'fluidity of nature'. If the kernel of the dialectic view is a knowledge that 'fixity and absoluteness are products of our own minds', is it possible to believe, relying on the dialectic method, that socialism will come to stay? If capitalism is bound to go out because of the inherent contradiction lying in it, has socialism any chance of faring better? According to the great law of change, it also will have its day and will pass out of existence as the 'time-spirit' goes on. Hegel's Absolute Idea is the

highest synthesis that has no antithesis to it and is supposed to be the category where all opposition and contradiction are reconciled and he can therefore consistently suppose that all process is at an end at that stage. But Marx has no right to believe in anything final and for him socialism is as much a thing of the passing time as capitalism itself is. Why, then, is this preparation for killing an enemy who is on the verge of death? Why, again, is this struggle for obtaining a kingdom the ruins of which have become already visible? If there is nothing ultimate, nothing absolute, nothing substantial, nothing of permanent value, no absolute standard by which we can judge progress or deterioration, we are not justified at all in making a distinction between the good and the bad, the true and the false, the higher and the lower, and we cannot reasonably recommend one course of action to the neglect of another. If socialism is not better or at least cannot be shown to be better than capitalism, how can persons be asked to engage themselves to wipe out the one and establish the other? If, on the other hand, socialism is supposed to be better than capitalism, we must have some standard that itself does not change during the valuation. If the standard also is supposed to be relative and changing, then what is supposed to be better may be really worse and what is supposed to be true may be really false. If Marx means really that it is only action, only altering or changing, and not theorising or reasoning that counts, his voluminous writings contradict him and he should not claim any credit for discovering or at least preaching a sound economic theory. If, however, he means merely that all theorising is not bad, and that while idealism *only* theorises, materialism promotes action and is to be supported as a theory, he admits the value of reason, and if reason demonstrates that no discussion as to truth or falsehood, as to relative values even, is possible without the recognition of an absolute standard, he is bound to accept it. To declare something to be false, something to be wrong implies the presence in mind of a standard by which the valuation is performed. And if this standard is regarded to be something which is variable, which may or may not be true, the valuation itself becomes void and meaningless. If Marx wants to set any value to his theoris-

ing, he cannot attempt to save him by denying the irresistible demands of reason. In the very attempt to deny an absolute standard, he has virtually accepted it. If Hegelianism is a 'colossal miscarriage', if Hegel's 'mode of thought placed everything on its head and completely reversed the real connections of the things in the world', if things are not the images of the ideas but the ideas are the abstract images of real things, and if materialism is the correct attitude towards things and sees everything as it is, he is to admit that for him also there is such a thing which he regards as truth, not a truth that according to him may be false or is false, but a truth that represents the real state of things, and that all philosophy including materialistic philosophy is not 'drunken speculation'. A man cannot be allowed to preach a philosophy, even if it be the philosophy of action, and declare that reason is useless and action is the only thing useful. Is it not a flat contradiction, a contradiction in terms, to suppose that there is nothing ultimate but matter, nothing but sensuous things, nothing but food and clothing that is real and that all the gifts of culture and civilisation including philosophy and religion are mere ideas and fancies, and at the same breath to attempt to prove it by reason, by preaching a Philosophy of Materialism and even shamelessly to designate it as 'dialectical', the term associated with the greatest advocates of reason and strongest denunciators of sense, I mean, Plato and Hegel? Is this attempt to prove by reason the worthlessness of reason not very much like the proverbial absurdity of proving to an insane man that he is insane? One can understand why in this present degenerate societies, these great apostles of freedom, freedom from the restraints of religion and morality, freedom from the slavery of culture, find a hearing, but it is incomprehensible how they can be worshipped as promulgators of a philosophy that is reasonable. A philosophy that teaches man that he is nothing but matter and asks him to forget that he is mind or spirit and to leave behind all that the culture of innumerable ages has bestowed on him, and attempts to interpret the world by the lowest and not by the highest category, has missed its mission and has nothing ennobling to recommend itself and appeal to the higher faculties of man. The contradiction

inherent in the antithesis will move it on to get it annulled and sublated in the higher synthesis and will show that it is nothing but the working of the 'time-spirit' and has not the truth that is claimed for it.

There is no necessity for overthrowing religion in order to promote the interests of socialism. Religion does not favour the capitalists at the cost of the poor wage-earners, and what is of real value in socialism has the sanction of religion. Religion does not teach man to be selfish or to grow rich at the expense of others. That wealth may be distributed equally amongst the whole population and that nobody may be unduly self-seeking seem to be the essential aim of religious teachings. Renunciation and not enjoyment, other-love and not self-love, God-centredness and not ego-centredness, is declared to be the basic principle of religion. "Do not bestow riches on the wealthy, support those who are poor" is the teaching everywhere. The Hindu scriptures hold that *vittaśāṭhya*, that is, deceitful expenditure or not spending up to one's full capacity, takes away the value and merit of the religious observances and emphatically enjoin that this should never be allowed to destroy the fruits of laborious undertakings. The same ceremony which may be performed by a poor man with a few pennies has to be performed by spending millions of pounds by a multi-millionaire if he is to reap the full benefits of his performance. The followers of Islam have been enjoined to make an annual valuation of their total assets and give away a definite fraction of these in charity. The motive behind these injunctions cannot but be anti-hoarding and distribution of wealth amongst all classes of people. This achieves the purpose in a far better way than what is prescribed by the Marxists. The practice of charity not with the idea of bestowing favours at will but from an obligatory sense of duty, not with the superior airs of a man at the top helping or sympathising with a miserable man at the bottom but with the sense of gratitude that he has been given an opportunity of being roused to his higher sentiments and of perceiving that all men are equal, is a much better means of achieving the end of distribution of wealth than state legislation or social compulsion. As a sanction, religious injunctions are much

more powerful than legislations, and Dr. Macdonell rightly remarks, "such a prohibition (referring to prohibition of intoxicants in Islam) by the founder of a religion seems to have resulted in general abstinence in this respect, while the effort to enforce it by democratic legislation at the present day does not seem to promise similar success."[1] Moreover, the compulsion or the legislation which leaves no room for the working of noble sentiments and bases itself on a naturalistic or a materialistic philosophy stands self-condemned. Dr. Otto rightly says, "if naturalism is in the right, thought is not free, and if thought is not free there can be no such thing as truth, for there can be no establishing of what truth is." If Marx is anxious to prove the truth of his theory to others, the obvious supposition is that he believes them to be minds possessing reason, participators in the universal reason which is the same in all and not merely matter and material bodies. It is not easy to understand how scientists devoting themselves wholly to the pursuit of truth can help recognising the presence of an absolute, universal reason. The discovery of every law is the finding of the universal reason by the individual reason, is the recognition of the harmony between the reason that is working in the human mind and what is expressed in nature. The old belief in man-centred teleology or that the sun and the moon and everything also have been created for the benefit of human beings is, no doubt, an anachronism, but it is an altogether different thing to believe in an all-pervading reason. To question the presence of such a universal reason is to doubt the rationality of the real and the intelligibility of the universe and is tantamount to close the doors of all scientific enquiry. The reality of an all-pervading reason working equally in spirit and nature is the presupposition of science and it is nothing short of suicide on the part of science if it attempts to deny its presence. Regularity and order, far from dismissing intelligence and purpose, are sure and unmistakable signs of the working of mind, and it is absolutely unintelligible how scientists, as soon as they are able to discover uniformity and system in the working of nature, think it to be sufficient ground for dispensing with the supposition of any mind behind

[1] *Comparative Religion*, p. 158.

nature. Because Nature exhibits regularity and order, uniformity and system, and no caprice or chaos, it is concluded that there is no reason or mind behind it. A fine argument! Are disorderliness and chaos, then, the signs of reason and intelligence? There is no antagonism between mechanism and purpose; mechanical regularity may be regarded as the exhibition of well-thought plan and purpose. Schelling rightly observes that "with all its mechanism nature is full of purpose". In the recognition of this reconciliation between mechanism and teleology lies the much-desired alliance between science and religion. If religion thinks that its object is *sui generis* and unique and that it is outrageous to seek to deal with it in the ordinary way, it is natural for science to dismiss religion when it finds that it is able to analyse its contents and that its methods are quite competent for the task. The antagonism between science and religion, between mechanism and purpose, is perhaps due to this one-sided outlook of both. There is nothing *sacred*, nothing of special moment and value, no distinctive significance and importance, in religious phenomena, science thinks, if these can be classed with other phenomena and if their origin can be shown, and actually eminent men of science have drawn the conclusion that religion is an exploded myth from the mere fact that a psychological analysis of religious belief has been possible, and that theories regarding origin of religion have been formulated. But whatever may be the case with religion, can there be anything more unreasonable in the scientist? Because we know what a thing is or how it originates, are we to conclude that it is nothing valuable? William James rightly says, "And the moment we renounce the absurd notion that a thing is exploded away as soon as it is classed with others, or its origin is shown, the moment we agree to stand by experimental results and inner quality, in judging of values" we are likely to ascertain the distinctive significance of religious phenomena far better by comparing them with other varieties of similar phenomena "than by refusing to consider their place in any more general series, and treating them as if they were outside of nature's order altogether".[1] As we shall have occasion in a later lecture to

[1] *The Varieties of Religious E perience*, p. 24.

show how freedom reconciles itself with mechanism, how what is freely conceived may express itself in the mechanism and regularity of the law, how there is not only no contradiction between an underlying freedom and a mechanical expression but that this is the true conception of the relation between noumena and phenomena, between reality and appearance, we refrain from elaborating it further at this stage. The man of science is to recognise that it is a free mind that manifests itself through the rigid laws of nature and that orderly sequence of events only shows the systematic working of reason. "The unseen region in question is not merely ideal", as James puts it, "for it produces effects in this world." Bertrand Russell who prides himself as a scientist has no right to say that mysticism expresses not a fact, but an emotion. William James, a radical empiricist and a scientific man, after carefully scrutinising all varieties of religious experience, says, "When we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality, for *we are turned into new men*, and consequences in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. But that which produces effects within another reality must be termed a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal." God is real, not only because it is the most direct, the clearest and the most direct and the most intimate experience, not only because it is one of the 'over-beliefs' which are the most valuable and interesting about a man, *but also because He produces real effects.* As the mystic experience fulfils all the tests, including the practical or the pragmatic, it is nothing short of dogmatism to regard it as a hallucination and place it on a par with the drunkard's vision of snakes. Moreover, "God's existence is the guarantee of an ideal order that shall be permanently preserved." It is this faith in the cosmic order, this absolute confidence in divine providence, that is the central thing in religion. God is not merely the object of personal communion of some favoured souls but is the hypothesis upon which the rational interpretation of the world, especially of the world of values, rests. And if the interpretation of all the higher aspects of this universe fails in the absence of such a hypothesis, this is ample scientific

proof of its being prolific and it has thereby earned every right to be regarded as verified. The real world is certainly more than what physical science shows it to be and unless one be wilfully blind to facts verified beyond doubt one cannot rest content with supposing that the world of sensations and scientific laws is all that there may be. The facts of mystic experience call for an explanation; their systematic recurrence and their agreement in essential points irrespective of differences in culture and civilisation, differences of time and space, in recognition of which the mystics are said to have 'neither birthday nor native land', demand a rational enquiry and cannot merely be dismissed as the private affair of individuals. Mysticism is not only authoritative for those who have been favoured with the experience but it has an appeal also to those who are still 'outsiders', but who are near enough to accept its suggestiveness and to perceive that it is not impossible. If mysticism has been able, as James puts it, 'to establish a presumption', if reason is satisfied that it offers a hypothesis 'which we may voluntarily ignore, but which as thinkers we cannot possibly upset', if the existence of mystical state '*absolutely* overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe', its philosophical supporters have achieved their purpose. It is never contended that rational justification of an experience can be a substitute for that experience, and for those who have not yet been fortunate to have the experience this acceptance by reason of its possibility, that is, of its rationality is all that is possible and is just the thing needed for creating that confidence, that trust, which is the indispensable preliminary to realisation. If mystical states show that 'non-mystical or rationalistic consciousness, based upon the understanding and the senses alone', is only one kind of consciousness and do 'open out the possibility of other orders of truths', and if reason concludes that it remains an open question whether mystical states 'may not be such superior points of view, windows through which the mind looks out upon a more extensive and inclusive world', philosophy has given its full support to religion. The actuality can only be had in experience; before the experience or the actuality comes, we have to be satisfied with possibility,

and if philosophy has shown its possibility and permissibility, mysticism has got all that it requires and all that it can have from reason. I do not understand what is meant when it is held that mysticism is rational and yet not true. William James, for example, says 'that which produces effects within another reality must be termed a reality itself, that there is no philosophical excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal', and in the same breath declares that 'the attempt to prove the truths of the deliverances of direct religious experience' by intellectual processes 'is absolutely hopeless'. Although the passages quoted are associated with a big name, it is difficult to resist the temptation of pointing out the flat contradiction involved in them. If there is no *philosophical* excuse for calling the mystical world unreal, do not 'intellectual processes' prove the truth of the deliverances of the direct religious experience? There is no doubt that by direct religious experience is meant the mystic experience. Is James, then, thinking of philosophy in terms other than those of 'intellectual processes'? Does he mean to say that while philosophy accords a welcome to religion, 'purely intellectual processes' do not? Is it an unnoticed contradiction or does the father of pragmatism and the inspirer of all modern anti-intellectualistic systems here want to declare openly that philosophy need not be rational or intellectual? It is a sad spectacle to find this great philosopher simply declaring Principal Caird's attempt to lay 'the foundations of religion in impartial reason' and to make 'religion universal by coercive reasoning' to be futile without any attempt to meet his arguments. He has no hesitation to reject Hegelian philosophy by merely saying that 'the whole of Germany, one may say, has positively rejected the Hegelian argumentation.' If rejection by Germany is good ground for dismissing Hegel, why is acceptance by Great Britain not a suffiicient reason for retaining him? Does not this prove that James is here finding arguments for his convictions, for what he wills to believe, and has forgotten the supreme function of the philosopher, *viz.*: the discovery of the universal and objective truth, which he only occasionally remembers when he wants to discredit his adversary? James ought to have been more frank. If he believes that religion

has its basis only in faith and that it is essentially an affair of private individuals, if he thinks that philosophy cannot stamp a warrant of veracity upon religious experience and is of opinion that ratiocination is 'an unreal path to the deity', if all the arguments for God's existence have value only for the faithful and if the truth of religion cannot be demonstrated by merely intellectual processes, he should have plainly stated like Bertrand Russell that religion is not a fact but an emotion and should have refrained from saying that there is no philosophical excuse for calling the mystical world unreal. Cardinal Newman told the bare truth when he stated, "I do not see much difference between avowing that there is no God and implying that nothing definite can be known for certain about Him." If experience is the sole criterion of truth and the critical examination of experience has no value in determining the truth or otherwise of the experience, philosophy has no function to perform and should be dismissed for ever. A philosopher who, while professing to discuss the value and validity of the religious experience, only points out how the conceptual processes fall short of the concrete experience and tells us that philosophy cannot take the place of religion, has a poor notion of his function and positively deceives himself and others. What is demanded from him is a definite answer as to whether reason warrants the possibility of the religious experience, *i.e.*, whether it is intelligible and rational, and if he declares that religion is possible and is perfectly intelligible, he has no right to say that its reality is not proved. Philosophy knows of no other test than that of reason, and if a thing is rational, nothing should stand on the way of its being accepted as real.

LECTURES III & IV

Confucianism, Buddhism and Jainism

It seems a strange coincidence that Buddha, Mahavira and Confucius should be preaching almost identical doctrines in the same period. All the three belonged to the 6th century B.C. and it is really interesting to note that at that remote period in history Confucius should be emphasising in China just the very ideas which were being elucidated to their countrymen by Gautama Buddha and Mahavira in India. The predominant feature in the teachings of all the three is the emphasis on self-culture and moral discipline and although there are metaphysical and logical discussions in Buddhism and Jainism there is a relative avoidance of technically religious or metaphysical discussions. There is no place for God in any of these systems and the teachings mark a new beginning or at least a new orientation in the religious tradition of the country. There is here a heterodoxy, a breaking in with the past, a revolt from the orthodox point of view, a turning away from external rites and ceremonies to the voice of conscience, an abandonment of ceremonialism implying superficial obedience to external laws, and an exhortation to self-purification and moral development. Mere observance of external rites and ceremonies is of no avail if there is not internal purity, no inner cleanliness. Metaphysical speculations do more harm than good as these cannot lead to conviction and become only fruitless discussions which turn the mind away from the real path. The real work which a man can do is to purify himself, to attain moral elevation, and once the heart is pure, the rest will come automatically. It is not possible to attain truth through mere intellectual discussions conducted by the impure mind, by the halting discursive understanding and the whole labour by way of metaphysical speculation will not only be entirely lost but may end in positive injury in the form of misguidance and leading in a wrong direction. It is wise to confine ourselves wholly to moral discipline and culture rather than

engage ourselves in intellectual speculation which is of doubtful value. Truth gets itself revealed to those who are pure in heart, and the mind freed from all bias and superstition, freed from lust and covetousness, freed from anxiety and restlessness, freed from desire and hankering, freed from thoughts of the past and the future, of gains and losses, of fame or slander, of praise or vilification, is certainly the fittest vehicle to receive the truth. It is perhaps this that the Buddha and Confucius had in mind when they studiously avoided all metaphysical speculations. When asked definitely as to why the Buddha was silent on the metaphysical issues, he replied that what the Buddha regarded as beneficial had been revealed by him and what he regarded as not beneficial had not been revealed. Is not this a conclusive proof of the position we have held, *viz.*, that the Buddha avoided metaphysics simply because he was definite that it would not profit man in the least, rather it might lead him astray. Perhaps he had noticed that the majority of men who accepted the existence of the self and of God on metaphysical grounds had not been profited by those beliefs and were not morally elevated and were passing their lives as if there were no God and no permanent self, and it is perhaps because of this observation that he thought that the reverse process would be more useful. It is not religion and metaphysics that should precede morality but it is morality that should precede religion and metaphysics. There was no necessity for proclaiming this open revolt against metaphysics and religion as it would have been indiscreet to do so at that stage of the society. The essence of the teaching of Hinduism is also exactly what the Buddha thought. When the mind becomes pure, it becomes a fit mirror for truth to be reflected on it. The rites and ceremonies are intended to purify the mind and have this as their sole aim. Mere moral maxims without their concrete embodiment in rituals and practices become generally uninteresting and too monotonous to yield fruitful results; this is perhaps the explanation of the external observances prescribed by religion. But it is also true that the external practices are misunderstood in course of ages by the common mass and their original aim and usefulness are forgotten and are taken as ends in themselves. This is the danger lurking

in the externalised symbols. Their inner significance is forgotten and they are taken at their face value. The Buddha and Confucius noticed the evil effects of the external practices and they were eager to explain to people that it is the inner significance, the morality, that counts and not the external observance of the rites, and in their mission for rediscovering the value of the inner law they found it necessary to overthrow the external. It is not a new doctrine that they were preaching; they were merely putting the emphasis where it rightly belonged. Buddhism is at one with Hinduism so far as the emphasis on morality, on the inner motive, is concerned. The difference lies in the valuation of the external observances. While Buddhism regards them as altogether useless, being as worthless as the outer husk, Hinduism thinks them to be essential embodiments that not only protect the inner kernel but also help the sprouting of the germ from it. Just as the seed without the outer covering is incompetent for the sprouting, so the abstract moral maxim without the concrete embodiment is not efficacious. Not that the Hindu did not emphasise the inner aspect; he knew it too well and Buddhism has merely isolated this aspect of their teachings. Dr. Rhys Davids arrives at a correct estimate of Buddhism when he says, " So far from showing how depraved and oppressive Hinduism was, it shows precisely the contrary; for none will deny that there is much that is beautiful and noble in Buddhism, and *Buddhism was the child, product of Hinduism.* Gautama's whole training was Brahminism, he probably deemed himself to be the more correct exponent of the spirit as distinct from the letter of the ancient faith, and it can only be claimed for him that he was the greatest, and wisest, and best of the Hindus."[1] All that is noble in Buddhism only shows the nobility of its parent, Hinduism. " Long before Gautama's time . . . . the Brāhmaṇas had paid great attention to the deepest questions of ontology and ethics, and were divided into different schools, in one or other of which most of Gautama's metaphysical tenets had previously been taught. Such originality as can be claimed for him arises more from the importance which

[1] *Buddhism*, p. 85.

he attached to moral training above ritual or metaphysics or penance; and to the systematised form in which he presented ideas derived from those of various previous thinkers." Those who think that Buddhism has no affiliation to Hinduism ought to be disillusioned by the extracts quoted above from one of the greatest authorities on Buddhism.

It is true that Buddhism and Jainism represent a revolt against traditional religion and they deny the authority of the Vedas simply because they teach that the non-observance of the rites and ceremonies prescribed by them result in sin and suffering. The Buddha found the origin of sin not in the omission or commission of certain external acts but in the violation of moral maxims and in desire and covetousness which form the real source of moral depravity. It may be noticed, however, that this emphasis on the inward motive in disregard of outward acts is not advocated by the children of Hinduism—Buddhism and Jainism—alone, but is also to be found in the Bhagavadgita which is regarded as the epitome of the religion and philosophy of the Hindus. "The Vedas deal with the three gunas; rise above the sphere of the three gunas; rise above duality and opposition and remain fixed in harmony and equilibrium",[1] says the Lord, and again, "The minds of those who are devoted to enjoyment and power, who are carried away by the flowery words contained in the Vedas and who are overridden by desires and who regard enjoyment in heaven as their highest goal do not and cannot experience that resoluteness and fixity (that is necessary for liberation)."[2] Everywhere desire has been held responsible for sin and evil and there is the exhortation to get rid of desires. " When a man completely forsakes all his desires having their seat in the mind and finds abundant satisfaction in the self alone, then, Pārtha, is he called a man of steady insight."[3] " He who is completely free from all desires and lives and moves without any longing and without the sense of 'I'-ness and 'my'-ness attains real peace."[4]

[1] II, 45.
[2] II, 42-44.
[3] II, 55.
[4] II, 71.

"It is desire, it is wrath (which is nothing but obstructed desire) that is the all-devouring source of all sin and evil and is the perpetual enemy of knowledge and liberation."[1] "He who controls his organs of action but continues to dwell on the objects of desire in his mind deludes himself and others and is a hypocrite, but he who controls his sense-organs yet continues to perform actions abandoning the feeling of attachment follows the right course and is immensely superior to the former."[2] Innumerable passages may be quoted from the Bhagavadgita alone which would show unmistakably the transference of emphasis from outward actions to the inward motive and the advocacy of desirelessness as the sure means to the goal. When we read these passages from the Gita and the Mahabharata (having their original in the earliest Upanishads which cannot by the farthest stretch of imagination be placed later than the Buddha) which clearly preach that it is desire that is the cause of bondage and that desirelessness alone is the means of liberation and when we find the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad proclaiming that there must be the renunciation of the three great desires, the *eṣanātraya* that comprise all desires, *viz.*: the desire for wealth, the desire for progeny and the desire for fame, before there can be preparation for the Great Illumination, there seems very little that is new and is of importance in Buddhism, and Dr. Rhys Davids seems to be certainly correct when he traces the originality of the Buddha more to the systematised form in which he presents the ideas of the previous thinkers than to any new idea of his own.

The question that is of supreme importance in dealing with these systems of thought is whether these are to be regarded as instances of religion without God or as instances of morality without religion or as simply atheistic systems. Are they really crude systems which have not yet risen up to the idea of God or are they definitely anti-theistic proclaiming against God and religion? None of these alternatives seems to be near the mark. Although moral discipline occupies a prominent part in these systems, still these cannot

[1] III, 37.
[2] III, 6-7.

be characterised as instances of morality without religion. It is sheer dogmatism not to regard a system as religion which has satisfied and is satisfying the religious needs of millions and millions of people for twenty-five centuries. Buddhism cannot be regarded as a mere code of morality which falls short of religion. In this connection it will not be out of place to discuss the relation between morality and religion. If religion consists in the awakening of the spirit and if it culminates in realising the oneness of all existence by discovering the spirit that is present in everything, morality may be regarded not only as the forerunner of religion but also as its indispensable basis. In moral consciousness, in the sense of the 'ought', in the unconditional command or the categorical imperative man first becomes aware of the existence of the spirit, of something that is very different from matter, *i.e.*, from things belonging to the natural order. Here he finds something altogether new, something that is not the resultant of any antecedent state, something that has no link in the chain of causes and effects, something that proclaims and establishes its supremacy by virtue of its birthright and is not satisfied with anything short of unconditional allegiance. The moral consciousness marks a new beginning in the life of the individual and shows that there is something other than and beyond the natural order of things. The dualism between spirit and matter, between self and nature becomes plainly manifest at this stage and man becomes conscious of his real mission, of another destiny than that of the natural being, of the mere animal in him. In the moral consciousness man becomes awakened to the life of the spirit, and categorical imperative merely means that he feels it incumbent on him to fulfil that life and finds no rest till it is accomplished. The sense of the spirit which man becomes alive to at this stage disaffiliates itself altogether from the natural order and does not have any compromise with it. It feels itself to be unconditional, to be absolutely free, to be beyond the natural order of causes and effects. A new sense of freedom, not revealed anywhere in the natural order, characterises the moral consciousness and is responsible for the dualism between the moral order and the natural order, between duty

and inclination, between the self and the impulses, between the Higher Self and the Lower Self. The freedom of the spirit of which man has a mere glimpse in his moral consciousness establishes itself fully in the religious consciousness and the opposition between freedom and mechanism, between spirit and nature, which seems to continue more or less throughout the moral life, becomes reconciled for ever in the life of religion. The religious life is only a continuation, an extension of the moral life, being a fuller and more expansive realisation of the spirit which had its first dawning in the moral consciousness. The spirit which declared its unconditional authority and demanded categorical obedience from nature in the moral life is now seen to be the sole occupier of the field. Nature is now perceived to be not only not alien to spirit but as the spirit itself in disguise. What had its faint beginnings in the dawning of the moral consciousness, what was a momentary vision from a far off distance, what shed its lustre from behind the clouds, what revealed itself only indistinctly through the voice of conscience, what proclaimed its authority from an undiscovered region, now manifests itself in full glory and shows that it has not only authority but also power, and absorbs nature or the not-self fully within itself.

Buddhism and Confucianism perhaps wanted to declare that the religious life was to be regarded as a continuation and extension of the moral life. The recognition of the spirit as the supreme Reality is all that is meant by religion and it is morality that prepares the ground for that recognition. If the moral preparation is complete, if nature has been subjected to pay due regard to the supremacy of the spirit, if matter has been perceived to be the creation of the spirit for its own realisation, if the real glory of the spirit—its purity and freedom—has been fully realised, if, in short, the rule of the spirit has been established, the essence of religion has been virtually achieved and its beginning firmly rooted. No special instruction is necessary for religion. The moral preparation is also the preparation for religion. When the heart is pure, when the soul is free from all prejudices and superstitions and has got itself rid of passions and desires, it is a fit vehicle for receiving the truth, or rather, it establishes

itself as the Truth. The death of the individual soul, the extinction of everything empirical (śāmvṛtika), the getting rid of all that makes for individuality and composition, is the birth of the universal, the resting in the transcendental consciousness. It is not anything that is acquired, anything that is achieved as the result of any process, but it is the resting in what eternally abides, equally in the empirical as well as in the transcendental. When all impurities are gone, when all that is there as the result of composition is gone, there remains nothing particular, nothing that has any name or form, nothing that we can call by any determinate name or signify by any determinate form, and it is all emptiness, it is all blank from the point of view of the particular, from the point of view of this world of duality and difference, from the point of view of empirical reality, and the transcendental consciousness alone remains. No teaching is necessary for the realisation of the transcendental consciousness as it is beyond all process. It is there in its abiding presence and is bound to be realised when the impurities, the obstructions or hindrances are eliminated. The Buddha realised that metaphysical discussions about this transcendental state were useless so long as purification was not attained. Nothing could prove it, all the premises being less general having been all derived from it. What was necessary was to remove the hindrances in order that the transcendental consciousness might reveal itself spontaneously, and it was for this reason that the Buddha concentrated on moral teaching alone. It was necessary to impress upon the people that mere observance of external rites was not religion. If the spirit is not revealed it is not religion. Residence in heaven, enjoying sensual pleasures and avoidance of physical pains are all material. If one performs religious rites for the sake of attaining Heaven, it is not finding or worshipping the spirit but merely serving Mammon or Matter. There was necessity for teachers like the Buddha and the teacher of the Bhagavadgita to emphasise that the worship of the spirit is the essence of religion. The creed of the Buddha is to be understood as extreme reaction against the formalism of ritualistic practices dissociated from the touch of the spirit. As the Buddha not only believed in the supremacy of the

spirit but devoted his entire life to the preaching of this truth, as he took it as his mission to proclaim to the world and to show to all men the nothingness of Matter which is composed of parts, as he unmistakably declared that in getting rid of connection with matter lies salvation (Nirvana), as he regards this state of Nirvana as one of absolute peace, there cannot be any doubt that he is preaching the noblest truths of religion, and that if he does not speak of any personal God or of any specifically religious practices other than the moral, it is perhaps because he thinks that in showing the way to the spirit and clearly demarcating it from the world of matter he has sufficiently shown the way to God which is all-spirit and no matter. If he confines his teachings to moral discipline it is because he thinks that in doing so he has securely laid the foundations which will infallibly have the superstructure of religion built on it. Buddhism is neither atheism nor religion without God, nor morality without religion but is the religion that believes in moral foundations and regards morality as the only way of approach to religion. If by God is meant spirit or pure consciousness without the least touch of matter, Buddhism not only believes in Him but is saturated with His presence. If the theist misses his God in Buddhism, it only proves that the personal God of the theist contains something other than Pure spirit, something which is not-spirit or matter, something which is not of the essence of Pure consciousness, and the fact that he is not satisfied with the Absolute Reality or the Pure consciousness of the Vedantist or the Buddhist shows clearly that he still hankers after something non-eternal, something transient and evanescent and that when this superficial covering is removed and the Absolute reveals itself in its native and naked splendour, he finds nothing which he is habituated to see and therefore regards it as the Void or Blank Negation. If the difference between God and the Absolute, between the Personal and the so-called Impersonal Reality, be supposed to lie in the distinction between what has consciousness and what is consciousness, if, in other words, the true conception of the ultimate Reality, according to the theist, is that consciousness belongs to it as a person, it may be asked: what is it over and above consciousness? What is that

supreme something which is supposed to possess consciousness? If it is consciousness and nothing but consciousness, the conception is not only unnecessary but also unmeaning and is only a remnant superstition of the ignorant mass; if, however, it is something other than consciousness, it can only be matter, non-spirit, something very far removed from the spiritual and the Divine. If the Buddhist Nirvana has been understood in the West to be nothing but Blank Negation, it is because in the attempt to reach the Pure Spirit, Buddhism has left behind everything that is and has connection with matter, everything by which the real could be understood and recognised, and when, therefore, the extinction of the material appendage is described, it is mistaken by the theist to be the extinction of Reality, of Consciousness itself.

In Brahminism there was the happy combination of the inner and the outer, the harmonious co-operation of the internal motive and the external practice. When, however, in course of ages persons forgot the real meaning and aim of the external observances and regarded them as ends in themselves and were satisfied with mere formal observance of the practices it was necessary for a reformer to point out that the external observances were not of much worth by themselves and that detached from their inner springs they lost all significance. When a reaction sets in, it very often goes to the other extreme and we find this in Buddhism when it vehemently denounces the Vedas and the rituals prescribed by them. Buddhism is not to be regarded as the discovery of a new truth or the imposition of a foreign culture on Hinduism. It is rather a revolt from within and is to be understood more as a corrective than as a rebellion. When it was pointed out by Samkara that the Upanishads had preached exactly the same thing, *viz.* : the denunciation of mere external practices, the emphasis on inner purification, the pointing to desires as the sole cause of misery and bondage, the prescribing of desirelessness as the only means to salvation, referring all evil ultimately to Ignorance and pointing to Right Knowledge as the means of uprooting the evil, there remained nothing new in Buddhism and it became completely absorbed in Hinduism. The fact that there is hardly a single follower of Buddhism in the land of its birth

at the present day is explained when it is remembered that Buddhism cannot show a single doctrine which cannot be traced to the Upanishads. The purificatory discipline enjoined by Buddhism is found elaborately and systematically discussed in the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali which are accepted by all schools of Hinduism, and the life of renunciation or the life of enlightenment advocated by Buddhism is discovered to be the goal of the Upanishadic teachings also. There is the same giving up of names and forms, giving up of the world consisting of names and forms, of duality and difference, and the same rising above or transcendence of this in both. There is the same distinction in both of *sāmvrtika* or *vyavahārika* (empirical) and *pāramārthika* (transcendental) reality. The life of the Jīvanmukta and of the Buddha or the Ārhat does not differ in any fundamental point. If the world becomes *śūnya* to one, it becomes *mithyā* to the other, and the two conceptions are identical. The *mithyātva* of the world is no hindrance to the daily life of the Jīvanmukta; the *śūnyatva* similarly offers no obstacle to the life of the Ārhat. If there is the same moral preparation, the same philosophy, the same ideal, the same emphasis and the same neglect of identical things, how can the one hold itself against the other? If Hinduism contains all the things that are preached by Buddhism, there is no necessity for Buddhism as a separate doctrine.

There is one important difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. The whole edifice of Hinduism is based on *adhikārabhedavāda* or the recognition of fundamental differences in the equipment of different individuals; Buddhism, like most other religions, takes no note of these differences and prescribes the same recipe for all. The Hindu sage knows the difference between the Brahmin, on the one hand, whose heredity and culture place him above the average man and who is endowed with inherent moral qualities and lives more in the intellectual and in the spiritual plane than in the sense plane, and the non-Brahmin, on the other, who is not so favourably equipped. He knows that the same prescription cannot benefit both equally. 'What is meat to one is poison to another' is a maxim that has greater value in the field of spiritual discipline than elsewhere.

and if the Hindu scriptures distinguish between the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin, between the higher and the lower equipment and prescribe a course for the former which is definitely forbidden for the latter, it is not because of any partiality for the one and hatred for the other but because of perfect impartiality and supreme wisdom. If all are to be treated impartially, that which is beneficial to each is to be administered and as there is no such thing which is equally beneficial to individuals belonging to different grades of equipment, the wise course seems to be to prescribe different courses for different grades. The distinctions of caste are only general class-divisions which have the greatest workable value although there may be a few inevitable exceptions here and there. Heredity and environment are regarded as the two most potent factors that go towards the formation of character and the caste system of the Hindus has emphasised both of these by imposing restrictions on free associations and carefully isolating and preserving the environment from alien influences.

As Buddhism avoided metaphysical speculations and specific religious discussions and confined itself mainly to moral instructions it became possible for it to neglect considerations of *adhikāra* or differences of equipment. The moral sense is inherent in every human being and there is hardly any man who can plead inability to understand and grasp the moral instructions. The Buddha rightly perceived that here lay the opportunity to rouse man's dulled consciousness and the slumbering sense of the spirit within him and he appealed directly to man's moral sense and sought to acquaint him with the divinity in him, the only God that counts and really exists. The subtle metaphysical problems and the highest religious doctrines presuppose an intellectual and spiritual equipment for being understood and discussed. As the Buddha purposively and definitely disallowed these topics there was no necessity for him to recognise differences of Adhikāra (Equipment), differences of caste or sect, and he could preach a doctrine which he held to be suitable for all. The wisdom underlying the doctrine of *Adhikārabheda*, of the distinction of caste or class, could not be perceived by the ignorant mass and was mistakenly

supposed to be a tyrannical imposition, an instance of oppression of the favoured few on the unfortunate and illiterate mass, and so when the Buddha appeared on the scene with his new doctrine obliterating all distinctions of class and caste and rejecting apparently unmeaning external rites and observances which so long were lying as a heavy burden with the majority of people, they had no hesitation in accepting the new creed which promised them deliverance from tyranny and oppression. The dry moral codes which were taught in isolation from the external rites and observances could not, however, satisfy the religious need of the masses and very soon after the death of the Buddha the worship of Buddha himself took the place of the worship of God, and the wisdom of the Hindu teaching as reflected in the combination of external practices with inward purity and piety became evident, and it became manifest to the world not only that it was very difficult for the mass to practise morality in isolation from external observances but also that religion, though grounded in moral purification, is something more than morality, that communion with God or rather the direct conversation of spirit with spirit means something immensely more than reverence for the moral ideal and the attempt to realise it in life. As we shall have occasion to discuss more fully the shortcomings of the merely moral as distinct from the religious life and to show how religion transcends morality we refrain from elaborating it further at this stage.

A—Confucianism

Confucius is one of the few supremely great personalities in the world, but he is also perhaps one of the many great men who have been misunderstood and misrepresented. The fact that he does not preach any philosophical doctrine and does not busy himself with founding a school or a sect but merely confines himself to the practical task of instructing heads of Government as to the best methods of administration and the common man the correct attitude towards the family and the society and the state, the very fact, in other words, that he avoids unprofitable speculations and engages himself in the task of showing the things that can be directly realised in practice and got hold of for self-improvement and culture, has been interpreted by many to signify that Confucius was the 'type and embodiment of materialistic wisdom and practical utilitarianism'. There cannot be a viler charge. It is a sheer irony of fate that the man who devoted his entire life to the uplift of his countrymen, the man who taught that " one should lay down one's life rather than quit the path of virtue ",[1] the man who says that "benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge are not infused into us from without; we *are certainly furnished with them*", the man who proclaims, "Better than one who knows what is right is one who is fond of what is right, and better than one who is fond of what is right is one *who delights in right*", the man who teaches the most sublime idealism and advocates the virtuous life neither for any gain nor profit in this world nor for the hope of any reward or merit in the next world and rises above all ceremonial religion by proclaiming that virtue resting on anything but itself is not real virtue, should be charged with materialism and utilitarianism, and with even 'a certain *selfishness*' as Mr. Jennings puts it. It requires indeed a genius to find selfishness in Confucius who is not an inch below the standard attained by the greatest moral teachers of the world including Immanuel Kant. " Do not unto

[1] *Sayings of Confucius*, p. 61.

others what you would not they should do unto you", and again, "To be able to do to others as we would be done by—this is the true domain of moral virtue"[1]—are the sayings of the great man. He says expressly, "If a man can for the space of one day subdue his selfishness and revert to natural laws, the whole world will call him good."[2] Are these expressions of selfishness on the part of the great teacher or does the estimate only prove the truth of Mr. Gile's remark in another connection that his (Legge's) "whole attitude to Confucianism bespoke one comprehensive and fatal foregone conclusion,—the conviction that it must at every point prove inferior to Christianity"? "The truth is" as Mr. Giles puts it, "though missionaries and other zealots have long attempted to obscure the fact, that the moral teaching of Confucius is absolutely the purest and least open to the charge of selfishness in the world."[3]

The most important point that is to be noticed in the teaching of Confucius is that he regards unselfishness and the moral virtues to be inherent in man. These are not to be gathered from without, not to be acquired through learning and education, but are really native and deeply implanted in the hearts of men. If man only 'reverts to the natural laws', if man can only get rid of the superficial adjuncts, if he follows his real nature, his true self, he becomes perfectly moral and religious. We find a similar teaching in the Bhagavadgita. "Prajapati or the creator in the beginning created men along with sacrifice and said 'By this shalt thou multiply. Let this yield you all that you desire'."[4] The sacrifice here spoken of evidently means the renunciation of selfishness. Even the literal meaning of sacrifice (yajña) implies offering of oblations to gods which involves the parting with natural possessions for the sake of the gods. *Tyāga* or renunciation forms the essence of sacrifice, and the couplet of the Bhagavadgita quoted above expresses that Yajña or the Spirit of renunciation or unselfishness is inherent in the human being and he is born

[1] *Sayings of Confucius*, p. 61.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 62.
[3] Introduction, p. 26.
[4] III, 10.

with it at the time of creation. The Bhagavadgita also shows that this spirit of *tyāga* or sacrifice is noticeable throughout the natural order. Everywhere in the cosmos this sacrifice is going on. "From food all creatures are born; food is produced from rain; rain comes from sacrifice; sacrifice has its origin in action."[1] The particles of food give themselves up and from this sacrifice, this offering of their lives, springs the life of the creatures; the clouds offer themselves as sacrifice and from this is produced food; the sacrificial oblations offered into the fire give themselves up and produce the clouds. Everywhere in this way may be observed the wheel of sacrifice going on. He who does not follow it lives in sin and lives in vain. He who delights in sense-pleasures forsaking deliberately the course manifested throughout the order of nature goes against the normal way and commits sin. Here, as in Confucius, it is definitely stated that man is not born selfish but that unselfishness is as natural to him as anything else.

Confucius has also been accused of placing undue importance on things external and of neglecting or underestimating the feeling in the heart. In his morality, Legge, for example, fails to find the 'gushings of a loving heart', but only notices 'the balancings of his intellect fettered by the decisions of men of old'. Anyone who reads the sayings of the great man will easily discover not only the falseness of the charge but also the extent of the distortion of the truth. If Confucius has laid the supreme emphasis on anything, it is on the feeling in the heart, on the Jen or the internal motive, as distinguished from the outward act. The reaction against the outer and the emphasis on the inner are no less evident in Confucius than in Buddhism. He fought relentlessly against conventional morality and etiquette when these conflicted with the dictates of conscience. It is true that he was careful to see that liberty did not degenerate into license, but it would be the farthest removed from truth if, on this account, the champion of liberty is represented to be 'fettered' by tradition and convention. If he is eager to look into ancient customs and seems to follow tradition, he never takes things over just as they were in the past

[1] *Ibid* III, 15.

and even when he is merely editing the sacred books he never forgets to stamp on them the spirit of Confucianism.

The central point in the teaching of Confucius is the conception of *Li* which is a very comprehensive term and is only comparable to the conception of Harmony. The successful working of the family as well as of the State depends on harmonious relations among the different members constituting the family or the State. If it is the duty of the son to obey the father, it is equally the duty of the father to be entirely altruistic, to have nothing but the welfare of the family as the motive of his actions. Harmony requires the restraint of egoistic propensities and there cannot be promotion of the common good unless this restraint is there. In the State, as in the family, the same principle of Harmony must be at work. If the emperor is the supreme authority of the state as the father of the nation as a whole, he should also have the supreme responsibility like the father of a family. Obedience and respect are genuinely due to him only because he identifies himself with the welfare of his people. There must be harmonius relations between the governor and the governed if the machinery is to work satisfactorily. It is the supreme principle of Harmony that should determine the relations between the different parts of the machine or rather between the different organs of the organism. It is this conception of *Li* that permeates the teachings of Confucius just as the principle of Harmony is the central thing in Plato's *Republic*.

The Master says very simple things which can be readily understood and never indulges in high-flown utterances and grandiose ideals. He believes that only in this way he can be of real service to his fellowmen and avoids metaphysical discussions. He says that all his knowledge 'is strung on one connecting thread' and this gives the whole clue to his philosophy. 'Loyalty to oneself and charity to one's neighbour'[1] sum up his teachings. He always advocates virtue for virtue's sake and enunciates the highest principles of morality. 'Wealth and rank unrighteously obtained',

[1] *Sayings of Confucius*, p. 118.

he says, 'seem to one as unsubstantial as floating clouds',[1] and this teaching is in perfect consonance with the Hindu view which places Dharma or righteousness in the very beginning and regards it as the basis of other ideals, *viz.*, Artha (Wealth), Kāma (Desire), and Moksha (Liberation). "Who can go out of a house except by the door?" Confucius asks. "In life", he answers, "why not pass likewise through the door of virtue?" Virtue or righteousness is according to him the only way to liberation and he confines his teaching to the elucidation of the virtuous life. "The princely man never for a single instant quits the path of virtue; in times of storm and stress he remains in it as fast as ever". "The princely man is one who knows neither grief nor fear". "The higher type of man makes a sense of duty the groundwork of his character, blends with it in action a sense of harmonious proportion, manifests it in a spirit of unselfishness and perfects it by the addition of sincerity and truth. Then indeed is he a noble character." The 'princely man' of Confucius who never quits the path of virtue and is above all grief and fear is akin to the liberated man, the *Mukta* or the *Jnāni*, and it is nothing but selfishness which prompts one to say that Confucius teaches utilitarianism or materialism.

It is true that Confucius avoids metaphysical speculations and once reprimands a pupil saying 'while you do not know life, what can you know about death?'[2] but he does not leave us in the dark as to why he adopts this principle. He thinks that all are not properly equipped for the higher discussions and believes that a course of self-cultivation should precede philosophising. "Let a pupil join with you in self-cultivation before you let him approach the general truths of philosophy, but let him approach these general truths before he is allowed to form his character for good",[3] he says. It is clear from this statement that while philosophical discussions are necessary for the final formation of character, for the complete training of the individual, they are not useful or profitable when self-control or self-culture

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[2] *The Living Thoughts of Confucius*, p. 8.
[3] *Sayings of Confucius*, p. 102.

has not been attained. It is to be noted that Confucius, unlike the Buddha, has great respect for the doctrine of *Adhikārabheda* or the doctrine of differences of equipment. "To those whose talents are above mediocrity, the highest subjects may be announced. To those who are below mediocrity, the highest subjects may not be announced ".[1] " You may speak of higher subjects to those who rise above the average level of mankind, but not to those who fall below it."[2] These statements clearly show why Confucius did not introduce the discussion on higher subjects in his teachings meant for the average man.

Confucius teaches the doctrine of the Golden Mean and anticipates Aristotle here just as he anticipates Kant in his preaching of duty for duty's sake and of doing unto others as one wishes to be done by. " That virtue is perfect which adheres to a constant mean. It has long been rare amongst man." "When there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow or joy, the mind may be said to be in equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of harmony." " Let the states of equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection and a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth and all things will be nourished and flourish." It is very difficult to follow the course of the Mean. "The knowing go beyond it and the stupid do not come up to it." Men all say that they are wise but happening to choose the course of the Mean they are not able to keep it for a round month. The Mean or the Path is not far from man. When men attempt to pursue a course which is removed very far from the indications of common consciousness, "this course cannot be considered the Path". The superior man accords with the course of the Mean and the way of the superior man may be found in its simple elements in the intercourse of common men and women; but in its utmost reaches it shines brightly through heaven and earth. The Jīvanmukta in the Vedanta similarly lives and moves like the ordinary man but all the while rests in the Absolute or Brāhmic consciousness. " The superior man ",

1 *The Living Thoughts of Confucius*, p. 57.
2 *Sayings of Confucius*, p. 98.

says Confucius, " does what is proper to the station in which he is; he does not desire to go beyond this." This doing what is proper to the station has been described in the Bhagavadgita as *Svadharma* and *Svakarma* and the going beyond as *Paradharma* which has been condemned. This doing *what is proper to the station* is the application of the doctrine of the Mean in practice and is also what is meant by the comprehensive term 'Propriety'. The ruler should not neglect the cultivation of his own character because it is only by the cultivation of his own character that he can ensure the confidence of his subordinates and unless the ruler gets proper men, he cannot administer the government rightly.

Confucianism expresses a great truth through the simple words put in the mouth of Mencius, " Those who follow that part of themselves which is great are great men, those who follow that part which is little are little men." Great emphasis is laid on the inner motive and self-purification. "There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination." If the will be set on virtue there will be no practice of wickedness. Confucius knows the great difference between theory and practice and says, "They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who *delight* in it." The culmination is in the delighting, in the placing of the whole self in the truth, which is very far removed from mere knowing the truth. ' Loving ' the truth means reverence and admiration for the truth, which though greatly in advance of theoretical knowledge of truth still falls short of the ideal and the goal, *viz.*, the delighting in or the self-surrender to or identification with the truth. Confucius teaches indeed a sublime idealism and a noble religion and the purest ethics, and it is nothing short of perversity to find in his teachings a selfishness and a materialism, a utilitarianism and a conservative traditionalism.

The beauty of the teachings of Confucius lies in the simplicity of his talks, in the directness and straightforwardness of his answers, in the confining of his topics to matters that concern practical life and are of vital interest to the common man, in his pointing out that the Path or the Way

is not very far removed from the indications of common consciousness, and in his attempt to explain abstract conceptions by taking recourse to analogies from everyday experience. "Filial piety is the root of all virtue and the stem out of which grows all moral teaching...... Our bodies to every hair and bit of skin—are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them:—this is the beginning of filial piety." This is very similar to the Upanishadic teaching, "pitṛdevo bhava", "mātṛdevo bhava", "Regard the father as your God", "regard the mother as your God". Confucius always exhorts man to follow his nature and shows the profound obligation that is imposed on man to act according to his nature and thus to perform the moral and spiritual actions. Man is not to be directed by fear of punishment but is only to be made conscious of what is natural to him. "What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature; an accordance with this nature is called the Path of Duty." Man's acts and behaviour can and should harmonise with the general course of the world. That is, then, 'a morality with cosmic perspective'. Heaven, according to Confucius, is the highest spiritual motive. Man receives his material substance from the earth, from *Yin*, his spiritual from Heaven, from *Yang*. "Our actions are capable of influencing and do influence world happenings for we have here spiritual power influencing spiritual power, and a chance human destiny independent of Heaven is about as improbable as a world-course independent of man. Trouble, misfortune, terrible events are the warning cries of a suffering world, cries urging men to restore order and return to the right path." Confucius sees Heaven and moral law closely related in origin and aim. "The law of Heaven is perfect, the law of man perfection." There is a perfect correspondence between the moral order and the natural order and only together do humanity and Heaven build the universe. This belief in the correspondence or co-working of the natural order and the moral may be regarded as one of the most important constituents of religion and as Confucius makes no secret of his belief in this regard, his system is certainly not merely ethical but religious as well. The distinction between

morality and religion is expressed in Confucianism in a beautiful manner. " A man who commands our liking is called a good man. He whose goodness is part of himself is what is called a real man. He whose goodness has been filled up is what is called a beautiful man. He whose completed goodness is brightly displayed is what is called a great man. When this great man exercises a transforming influence he is what is called a sage. When the sage is beyond our knowledge he is what is called a spirit-man."[1] Whatever may be the value of the distinctions of the different grades, there is not the least doubt that according to Confucianism religion is the culmination of morality and that the presence of spirit which is recognised first in the moral consciousness of man finds its consummation in the ' Spirit-man ' or man as all-spirit or all-consciousness.

Although Confucius teaches lofty morals and a sublime idealism, he never forgets that his aim is to train man in his practical life. He hardly asks people to follow an ideal which it is difficult to put into practice. Some one said, " What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" The Master said, " With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." The Master knows that he is instructing the common man and hence does not introduce the conduct that befits only the sage and the ' Spirit-man '. It is not proper to form an estimate of a teacher who recognises the value of the principle of *adhikārabheda* or differences in equipment from his occasional utterances and instructions, because what he says in one place may be due only to its suitability on that particular occasion and may not be the truth in all relations. When Kung-hsi-Hua said to Confucius "When Yu asked if he should put the precepts which he heard into practice, you replied, Sir, that he had his father and elder brother to consult first. When Chiu asked the same question, you said, ' Act at once according to the instruction that is given to you '. Now I am puzzled, and beg for an explanation."—The Master replied, " Chiu is apt to hang back, therefore, I

[1] *The Living Thoughts of Confucius*, p. 108.

press him on. Yu has eagerness enough for two, therefore, I hold him back."

Confucius is really a great man though he did not attain much success in the eyes of the worldly men during his lifetime, as is the case with most of the great men of the world. He explicitly states that ' in the study of virtue ' he ' begins at the bottom and tends upwards '. He does not formulate any grandiose ideal or any big metaphysical system, yet he is a man who worked ungrudgingly in order to attain truth and who devoted his whole life to the preaching of the truth which he had attained. He used to spend whole days without food and whole nights without sleep in order to meditate. His position may justly be compared with that of Socrates and he teaches not merely politics or ethics but all that is necessary for the uplift of his countrymen. He also had a band of devoted followers who preached the master's doctrine and elucidated it when necessary. The man who asked people to lay down their lives rather than quit the path of virtue and told them that virtue is a jewel that shines by its own light and is to be practised without consideration of any reward either in this life or hereafter, the man who regarded unselfishness and charity to one's neighbour as the ideal of conduct, the man who spoke of *delighting* in truth as the highest attainment, the man who asked people to do to others as one would be done by, the man who regarded Harmony as the supreme principle of the universe and also as the supreme principle of Good Conduct and the guide in life, the man who taught the path of the constant Mean, the man who understood and explained the highest in terms of and in analogy with the indications of common consciousness, above all, the man who exhorted his fellow-men to regulate their lives in accordance with the supreme ideal, must be a sublime idealist, a selfless philanthropist, a seer and a prophet, a great teacher of mankind and a great sage who teaches more by example than by precepts. Confucianism is at once a philosophy and a religion, a guide in thought as well as in conduct, a system that places before man his supreme ideal and also the way to its attainment, and if this is mere morality without religion, it is difficult to understand what the essence of religion is.

B—Buddhism

Although Buddhism is the religion that is still professed by millions of men forming 15 per cent. of the total population of the world and is the object of attraction of many great men belonging to other religions, there is perhaps no other religion which has been so grossly misunderstood and so perfectly misrepresented. It has been supposed, for example, to deny the existence of soul and God and to preach total annihilation as the *summum bonum* of men. It is very often referred to as the classical example of a religion without God and sometimes it is denied even the appellation of religion and is regared merely as a way of life. There is a great deal of unanimity of opinion, however, regarding its high ethics, but although it may sound strange, it is a fact that even this has been denied by some of its most learned critics. Bishop Copleston, for example, says unhesitatingly in his work, "Buddhism", "The motive which Buddhist morality recognises, if it can be said to recognise any, is *wholly selfish and individual*. It is not for the love of truth or goodness, nor for the benefit of others, it is *solely for the individual's own advantage* that he is incited to cultivate virtue." It is hard to believe that even the worst enemy of Buddhism could bring this wild charge against it, but there are facts which are stranger than fiction and Bishop Copleston's statement is a glaring instance of such cases. From the way in which he goes on to show that there is no sense of duty or of obligation in Buddhist ethics and that there is no conception of Hope or of any high possibilities or capacities of men in Buddhism, it is clear that his ignorance of the important literature on Mahayana Buddhism is to a great extent wilful and that he is anxious to prove the superiority of his own religion at any cost. Buddhism never forgets that individual salvation is of no avail if it is not the means to the liberation of others. It has never considered individual good as dissociated from the good of others, and the motive of meritorious action must always, according to it, be the good of other sentient beings. The famous text of the 'Bodhicharyāvatāra '[1] shows clearly the excellence of Buddhist ethics. " It

[1] p. 331.

is not for the sake of the kingship of the gods, or for the fear of birth as an animal, that virtue is practised, but it is for the purpose of acquiring the means to Buddhahood whereby all beings may be benefited and made happy." Āryadeva unambiguously shows the cardinal principle of Buddhist morality, *viz.*, that thoughts for the good of others must precede those for the good of one's own self—*mā bhūt tanmama kusalamūlam yanna sarvasattvopajivyam syāt*, in the following statement "Those who are afraid of *samsāra* and seek their own advantage and salvation are inferior to those aspirants to Buddhahood who rejoice at their rebirth for it gives them an opportunity to do good to others." The true aspirant to Buddhahood cannot bear the thought of leaving his fellow-men behind in misery and suffering, while he himself should be working for salvation and be wishing to have the calm repose of the Nirvana, saturated as he is with the feeling of universal love. Prahlāda, the prince of devotees, is credited with saying that he does not desire his own salvation so long as a single human being is left in this world to undergo suffering. The charge that is very often laid by western critics against the Eastern conception of liberation that it is a selfish individual salvation having no regard for the good of others is based entirely on ignorance of the real meaning of the Hindu or the Buddhist conception. How can the Hindu who is charged with losing his individual self in the universal, or the Buddhist who is charged with having the extinction of the self as his goal, be also charged in the same breath with selfishness, working for his own good and not for the good of others? The very conception of individuality is declared by the Vedantist and the Buddhist to be ultimately unreal, to be nothing but an illusion or a delusion. If Brahman or Nirvana, which is supposed to be the extinction of individuality, be the goal, where is, then, the room for selfishness? As we shall have occasion to discuss in detail the Vedantic conception of Liberation and the Buddhist conception of Dharmakāya and to show that in both there is the fulfilment of individuality, that there is neither selfishness nor loss of individuality and that there is here the most satisfactory conception of the relation of the individual to the

universal, we do not elaborate this point further at this stage. The few extracts quoted above from Buddhist Sacred Books will, I hope, sufficiently show the extent of misrepresentation by Bishop Copleston and one should be careful before one accepts the version given by a foreigner or a man belonging to a different religion. The very conception of Bodhisattva as one who is ever striving for the enlightenment of other sentient beings through the practice of the four great vows, *viz.* : (1) To save all beings, (2) To destroy all evil passion, (3) To learn the truth and teach it to others, (4) *To lead all beings towards Buddhahood*, gives the greatest lie to Copleston's theory and no research is needed to show that the charge of selfishness is the last that can be levelled against Buddhism.

Buddhism is not merely a way of life and a mere ethical doctrine but is genuine religion and philosophy although it does not speak of God as the source of this universe or as a personal being with whom man can be in communion. We shall discuss in a later chapter as to when religion conceives of Personal God and when it transcends the personal conception and arrives at the supra-personal state. In Buddhism the law of Karma performs the functions of God and no necessity is felt for the working of Providence. It is the law of Karma that joins happiness with virtue and misery with vice and awards rewards and punishments according to the merits and demerits of actions.

The belief in an after-life, the belief that there is a proper distribution of the fruits of actions, the belief in the correspondence between the natural and the moral order, the belief that there is something deeper than what is experienced in the surface life, and lastly, the belief in a state of absolute peace, may be regarded as the true marks of religion and in Buddhism all of them are found abundantly. In Buddhism is found an evaluation of the meaning of existence and we notice that if it declares that all existence is suffering, it also analyses the cause of suffering and shows the way whereby suffering may be avoided for ever. It declares that it is desire that is the root cause of all suffering and that if there is extinction of desire, there will be total extinction of suffering. It prescribes the eightfold noble path for the attainment

of the goal, *viz.* :—(1) Right Views (2) Right Aims (3) Right Words (4) Right Behaviour (5) Right Living (6) Right Effort (7) Right Mindfulness and (8) Right Meditation and Tranquillity, and as it enquires into the meaning and value of life and shows the way to the attainment of the *summum bonum* and the goal, it is undoubtedly a genuine philosophy as well as religion. As Buddhism has not only raised to the forefront the deepest problem of philosophy and religion, *viz.*, the meaning and mission of human life but has given a solution which is one of the most important that have ever found a place in human speculation, it is nothing short of prejudice and superstition to think that it is not a genuine religion or philosophical system simply because there is in it no mention of traditional God or the habitual repetition of stock phrases of professional philosophers.

It is true, Buddhism has made certain very startling statements hitherto unknown in the field of religion, and it may be that it is just because of these statements that it has been denied a place amongst religious systems by the fanatics and the upholders of the orthodox point of view. But it is also to be seriously considered whether these statements may not have some other meaning than what appears on the surface. If all religions believe in an Absolute existence and in the permanent soul or self, how is it that Buddhism appealed to almost half the population of the world though proclaiming that there is no soul or self and that there is only the Great Void? If Nirvana means total annihilation or extinction of everything including the soul as even the best equipped western mind supposes, is there any special charm attaching to it that should attract millions and millions of men from different parts of the world? Are not these matters for serious reflection and is it not worth while to attempt to understand the real meaning of Buddha's teachings and to see the novelty and import of his enlightened vision?

We take up first the denial of the soul or the self. It was an astounding proposal to Buddha's contemporaries. It was no new thing for them to hear that all is suffering and that all is temporary. The Bhagavadgita epitomises upanishadic thought and Hindu thought in general when it says, *anityam asukham lokam imam prāpya bhajaswa mām,* " This

world is transitory and joyless, having come here do thou worship me." The impermanence of the world was perceived long ago by the Hindu sages and they had also realised that nothing impermanent could yield happiness. When Buddha preached these things, it was very familiar to his countrymen and they regarded it as nothing but the Hindu view. But it was very different with Buddha's view of the Self. The Soul or the Self was regarded by the Hindus as a permanent substance which remained the same throughout the vicissitudes of the present life and ensured continuity between the past, present and the future lives. The elaborate sacrifices (*yajña*) enjoined by the Vedas involving enormous expenditure and great hardship could be undertaken only if the self which performed the sacrifices endured as a permanent entity to reap in an after life the fruits of the action. The substantiality and permanence of the self were almost postulates on which rested the value and validity of the sacrifices and other rites prescribed by the scriptures. If nothing remains permanent, if the self also is as transitory as anything else, if there is no abiding Soul or Self, the thought of a future life and a hereafter cannot engage our attention at all. So when Buddhism comes forward with its doctrine of the not-self or rather with its denial of the self, it has no other alternative but to declare itself as heterodox and openly deny the validity of the Vedas. It is really a new thing, a new path other than that shown by the Vedas, and Buddha claims new enlightenment in this regard. He says he has discovered the golden mean, the glorious middle path, the *madhyamārga*, which does not demand a rigid austerity, a total abstinence, a total annihilation of sensibility, a senseless mortification of the body, nor does it prescribe or allow a life of sense-enjoyment, an yielding to the temptations of the senses. He holds that the truth lies in adopting the middle course. The body is to be subjugated to the spirit, the spirit is to be recognised as the master of the body, the body is to be disciplined as a fit instrument for the working of the spirit and is not to be reduced to an inert and motionless mass through meaningless mortification and penance. Death of the body does not necessarily mean the emergence of the spirit. The body may gradually be dis-

solved into its original elements for want of supply of food and drink to it, but nothing in the way of the spirit may have been gained thereby. " Not nakedness, nor platted hair, nor dirt, not fasting, nor lying on the earth, not rubbing with dust, not sitting motionless, can purify a mortal who has not overcome desires. He, though dressed in fine apparel, exercises tranquillity, is quiet, subdued, restrained, chaste and has ceased to find fault with other beings, he indeed is a Brāhmaṇa, an ascetic, a friar."[1] The emergence of the spirit, the consciousness of the everlasting reality is the goal, and Buddha says he has himself realised the futility of mere mortification of the body as such for the attainment of that object. It is moral discipline, regulation and not extirpation of the senses, that is more effective for the purpose and he enjoins a full course of moral discipline in place of the routine practices and formal observances enjoined by the scriptures. This thwarting the authority of the Vedas and preaching the futility of their injunctions and prohibitions mark his breach with Hinduism and in order to make his doctrine acceptable to the mass, he preaches his theory of the not-self and shows that what they take to be the self is not the self at all. Edward Caird rightly notices that " for the Buddhist the last illusion to be destroyed is the existence of the individual self, for the desire that this individual self should be preserved is the root or parent of all other desires that enslave us to external things and bind us on the wheel of change. The ' will to live ' is the root of all evil, and the last enemy to be destroyed by him who is seeking for freedom from the sorrows of the world."[2] It is true that the clinging to objects is rooted in the false notion of the self and unless this false notion can be removed desires cannot be uprooted and liberation cannot be attained. But Caird misses entirely the substance of Buddha's teaching when he thinks that in the denial of the self, not only the false notion of the self has been sought to be removed, but that the very light of self-consciousness has also been denied along with it, and that the Buddhist goal is utter extinction of life and thought, utter extinction of everything. " Peace

[1] *Dhammapada*, §§ 141-2.

[2] *The Evolution of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 360.

and rest for the weary are to be found not in self-mortification, though that is on the way to it: not even in utter unselfishness or universal benevolence to all things that live, though that is far on the way to it: but in *the absolute dying out of the light of self-consciousness* for want of fuel, *the extinction of life and thought* through the extinction of the will to live, the peace of Nirvana which is untroubled with any breath of vain desire, the peace of the 'dewdrop' which 'melts into the silent sea' never to be distinguished from it again. This is the *strange* faith in which many centuries ago India found healing for its pains."[1] Buddha's all-embracing love or charity for all beings, which Caird himself recognises to be even more explicitly stated in the Dhammapada than in the New Treatment, *viz.*, "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, hatred ceases by love"[2] "Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good,"[3] is of no avail as in the end the Buddhist and his fellow creatures have to lose themselves in the '*empty* peace of Nirvana'. Caird is not slow to perceive that this is a strange doctrine having total extinction or nothingness as its aim, but instead of thinking that this cannot be the true meaning and interpretation of a sublime religion, he finds in it only an extreme and a violent reaction against objective religion and is satisfied with noticing here one instance of the working of his favourite theory.

By the denial of the self, Buddha wanted to show that what was regarded as the self was not the self at all. He analyses all existence and shows that the whole cosmos is always in a course of change. "To this universal law of composition and dissolution men and gods form no exception; the unity of forces which constitutes a sentient being must sooner or later be dissolved; and it is only through ignorance and delusion that such a being indulges in the dream that it is a separate and self-existent entity."[4] Man consists of an assemblage of conditions, material qualities, sensations, abstract ideas, tendencies of mind and mental powers.

1 *The Evolution of Religion*, pp. 360-61.
2 *Dhammapada*, pp. 3-5.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 223.
4 Rhys Davids: *Buddhism*, p. 86.

"The first group, material qualities, are like a mass of foam that gradually forms and then vanishes. The second group, the sensations, are like a bubble dancing on the face of the water. The third group, the ideas, are like the uncertain mirage that appears in the sunshine. The fourth group, the mental and moral predispositions, are like the plantain stalk, without firmness or solidity. And the last group, the thoughts, are like a spectre or magical illusion."[1] In none of these divisions of the qualities of sentient beings the soul may be found. The body and all the other divisions are constantly changing and man is never the same in two consecutive moments. The constant flux and impermanence which Buddha points out in everything belonging to this universe, the human being not excepted, show that there is no room for any permanent entity which is designated as the soul. The belief in self or soul is regarded as a heresy and this is amply proved by the word *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* and also by constant reference to *attavāda* as a part of the chain of causes that lead to the origin of evil. Buddha has no doubt that much of the evil is due to man's belief in the traditional doctrine of the soul and he is anxious to show the falsity of the doctrine. A superficial observer or a foreigner having no intimate acquaintance with the tradition and teaching of India may very well take the denial of the self to be the real teaching of the Buddha and not being able to read between the lines may altogether miss the essence of the doctrine. Buddha shows like the Vedantist that none of the component parts, *viz.*, the body, the sense-organs, the vital air, the mind or the intellect, has the character of changelessness and therefore cannot be identified with the self or the soul. It is due to ignorance and delusion that the body or the mind or the intellect (buddhi) is taken as the soul. Buddha shows through correct analysis that the so-called permanent substance is not to be found anywhere in the combination known as the individual or the Jīva. It is just what the Vedantist, the strongest champion of the doctrine of the soul, also does and if this be the only evidence on which Buddha is supposed to deny the soul, it is surely wrong. Instead of declaring like

[1] Hardy: *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 424.

the Vedantist that there is a soul which no ordinary mortal experiences, Buddha thought that it would be more profitable to show that what was regarded as the self was not the self. He proceeds like an empiricist beginning with what is actually experienced. In the world of gods and men, there is nothing that is permanent. The *Jagat* (world) according to the Vedantist also is *mithyā* (unreal). When it is realised that nothing in this world can be identified with the self, the false notion about the self, the sense of the self in what is not the self, is removed and the ground is fully prepared for the realisation of the universal consciousness that pervades everywhere through eternity. The Vedantist and the Buddhist are perhaps working with the same aim from opposite ends. Buddha shows that there is no self in the world and that what is regarded as the individual self is only a conglomeration and a combination that must have an end and an annihilation. The Vedantist shows that there is something beyond the world, beyond change and impermanence, above individuality and combination, above multiplicity and variety, above time and the chain of causation. The Buddha perceived that to talk of the universal consciousness, of the transcendent beyond, to the ignorant man having no preparation was not only futile but positively injurious and therefore engaged himself in preparing the ground and refrained from talking anything about higher topics. He plainly says to Mālukyaputta that what has been considered beneficial had been revealed by him and what had not been considered beneficial had not been revealed. "Therefore, Mālukyaputta, whatsoever has not been revealed by him, let that remain unrevealed and what has been revealed, let it be revealed." Buddha is definitely of opinion that the knowledge of metaphysical truths does not benefit the average man[1] and does not conduce to progress in holiness nor does it contribute to peace and enlightenment. If man is to wait till the metaphysical problems are solved beyond doubt, he will have to wait for an indefinite period. "The questions will never be answered; the Path will never

[1] Hardy: *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 375, "When Mālunka asked the Buddha whether the existence of the world is eternal or not eternal, he made no reply; but the reason of this was that it was considered by the teacher as an enquiry that tended to no profit".

be entered, and what is worse, the evil passions which are generated by verbal controversy will poison the springs of spiritual life."[1] To wait and not to advance in the life of holiness till the metaphysical problems about the soul and the future life are solved is, Buddha says, analogous to the wounded man not allowing himself to be treated by a skilful physician till he is told whether the man who has wounded him is a Brahmin or a Sūdra or whether the man is tall or short. Buddha teaches his disciples all that is of supreme importance to them, *viz.*, the truth of suffering, the truth of the source of suffering and the truth of the way to the cessation of suffering.

The passage that is so often referred to, as indicative of there being nothing behind the surface instructions, "I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine for, in respect of the truths, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back,"[2] cannot be taken literally in view of what he says to Mālukyaputta, "Whatsoever has not been revealed by me let that remain unrevealed." As his main motive has been the instruction of average people, he teaches what suits all and there is no necessity for him to make any distinction between esoteric and exoteric truth. But this does not mean that when he says that there is no self, no permanent entity, he actually denies the light of consciousness. The individual is only a conglomeration, a combination of impermanent things and there is nothing permanent in individuality. The longing for the continuation of individuality, a clinging to worldly things for the sake of the individual self, is nothing but a delusion, for there is no such thing as the individual self, there is nothing in the individual that is not due to combination and will not be extinct. This is all that the Buddha shows: he does not and cannot say that along with the extinction of individuality, there is also extinction of consciousness. If there is nothing, absolutely nothing in reality, if it is after all a Void and Blank that is the goal of all

[1] Edmund Holmes: *The Creed of the Buddha*, p. 145.
[2] *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, II. 32.

striving, if Nirvana is not a fulfilment but a cessation, not a fruition but mere emptiness, not a peace and a calm but mere nullity, not light but darkness, not life but utter death and destruction, we fail to understand what *enlightenment* Gautama received under the Bodhi tree. The light of the universal consciousness must have dawned on him and showed him the illusoriness of individuality, and it is with an uncommon earnestness that he preaches his newly realised truth, *viz.*, that the individual self is not real but is only an illusion. It is not a new doctrine, however; it is a truth that was preached by the Upanishads long ago. Buddha did not say anything about the universal consciousness because he knew that it was absolutely profitless and carried no significance for the ordinary man. The average man takes his individual self to be real and it would be of infinite service if he could be rid of that illusion, because as soon as the superimposition of individuality would be removed, the universal consciousness which is all-pervading and eternal would manifest itself in its full glory. Instead of saying that the universal consciousness is, which is the theme of the Upanishads, Buddha begins at the other end and takes pains to show that the individual self is not. Is there any meaning in preaching the way to the cessation of suffering of the individual if the only recipe that Buddha can prescribe is the extinction of everything including the light of consciousness? Does Buddha hope to be regarded as a great physician if the only prescription he knows of curing the patient is by killing him? The Western critic does not pause to consider this absurdity that underlies his interpretation and estimate of Buddhism. *Either* the self that is denied by the Buddha is only the *individual* self that is superimposed on the universal self and the perception of the illusoriness of which only manifests the light of the universal consciousness, *or* the enlightenment of the Buddha must be supposed to be a mirage, a false light shown to him by Māra, a way guided by the Devil that leads to utter destruction and death, to impenetrable darkness and total extinction. If the individual self is an illusion, it is the consciousness of the universal Self, the apprehension and realisation of the universal or absolute consciousness as the ultimate reality that must be supposed

to have shown the illusoriness, the falsity of the individual. If it is the higher category that has shown the falsity of the lower, if it is the Absolute in whose presence the individual has been of necessity reduced to the status of an illusion, it is the Vedantic view; there cannot be the perception of illusoriness without the consciousness of the substratum on which the illusion stands, and if Buddha declares individuality to be an illusion, he must have done this standing on the rock of universal consciousness. If, on the other hand Buddha's teaching is taken at its surface value it becomes not only insignificant but also self-contradictory and the enlightened doctrine loses all meaning and significance and there remains nothing noble in it, no vision of anything sublime, no hope or promise of anything elevating or attractive.

What is within the flux cannot perceive that all is fleeting and changing. That everything in this world is changing can be perceived only by one who is beyond and above the world of change. So Buddha's doctrine of impermanence is meant to apply only to the world and not to what is beyond the world. The Peace of Nirvana is the Absolute that transcends the world of change and impermanence. Change cannot be perceived to be change except in relation to something unchanging. When *everything* is perceived to be changing, everything is seen to be fleeting and temporary, it is a sure indication that the solid foundation of changelessness has been reached, because it is only at this stage that everything can be perceived to be changing. This thought is inherent in Buddhism, although it is not explicitly stated. Although no distinction was made between exoteric and esoteric Buddhism, in course of time this distinction became necessary. Mahayana Buddhism found the necessity of an esoteric interpretation and it could not remain satisfied with the Hinayana conservatism and narrowness. Buddhism could not be explained as a consistent doctrine unless the necessary advance was made and the Mahayana doctrine distinguished between *Samvritti-Satya* (Conditional or Relative Truth) and *Paramārtha Satya* (Absolute Truth). The Madhyamika calls the highest truth, Void or Sūnya, because nothing connected with relativity can be predicated of it.

Void does not mean nothingness; "it is only void or empty of all relative terms and descriptions. In other words, it is absolute, that is, all that can be said of it fails to give any correct idea of it."[1] Mahayana Buddhism brings out the positive aspects of Buddha's teachings and makes explicit what was latent in Buddha's silence on metaphysical topics. It explains *tathātā* or suchness as seeing things as they are, *i.e.*, going back to a state of mind before the division of the knowing and the known takes place. The knowledge of suchness is the knowledge of non-discrimination. This aspect of Mahayana teaching corresponds strikingly with the Vedantic doctrine of *triputivilaya*, or the merging of the knower, the known and the process of knowing in one absolute state. This is absolute knowledge which, according to the Mahayana, is "knowledge of the Absolute which is absolute truth".[2] Buddha certainly declares that there is no substantial entity known as the Ego. As all is transitory and fleeting, there is no self or ego as is popularly regarded as persisting or enduring throughout the changing states of consciousness. But the Mahayanist points out that while Buddha shows unsubstantiality or unreality of the ego, of the individual self, he never denies the reality of the universal consciousness or the Absolute Truth (Paramārtha Satya). Mahayana or great vehicle which is large enough to carry all beings to salvation in contrast with Hinayana or "Small Vehicle" which can carry only a few is not the creation of Nagarjuna but is contained in Buddha's teachings as preserved in the Pali Canon among Mahasanghikas and is only developed and made explicit under the guidance of men like Nagarjuna and Asanga and Vasubandhu. Whatever Buddha may have said regarding the absence of any esoteric element in his teachings, it cannot be denied that the Mahayana school brings out the esoteric teaching in Buddhism and supplies the missing element that is necessary to make it a consistent doctrine. There is no permanence in the world, no Self in what is taken to be the Self, no Absolute, no God, no Peace, in this world. The Mahayanists do not find here

[1] B. L. Suzuki: *Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 24.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

the complete teaching of the Buddha but regard it as only preliminary to the higher teaching which shows the Absolute Truth (Paramārtha Satya) and the Nirvana, the *summum bonum* and the Perfect Peace. Relative truth concerns itself with duality but it is possible to go back to a state where the division of the knower and the known, the subject and the object has not taken place. Asvaghosha describes the nature of suchness thus :—"As far as suchness itself is concerned, it is the same in all beings, it knows no increase in the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, and no decrease in other beings; it was not born in the past, it will not pass away in the future; it remains constant and unchanged. From the first it contains in itself all virtues and there is nothing wanting in it . . . It has in itself the great light of Prajnā whereby the entire universe is illumined to its farthest end, it has the knowledge of Truth . . . it is eternal, blissful, self-ruling and free from defilement, it is cool and refreshing, unchanged and unfettered, suchness is non-dualistic." It is only due to our karma-consciousness whereby things are presented to us in the aspect of birth and death that differentiation comes in. It is evident from this description of Asvaghosha that Suchness is not the Void or Blank Negation and is nothing short of the Absolute. The Void or the Śūnya with the Mahayanist is not anything like emptiness but is the fullness of the Absolute which is not reduced or curtailed by any determination. The Void is not to be reached by intellection but is to be perceived intuitively. If you do not have the perception, no amount of argument will help you; if, on the other hand, you have it, no counter-argument can dispossess you of it. The Mahayanist Śūnya is in many respects identical with the Vedantic Absolute and the attempt to interpret it negatively is to miss its essence altogether. The idea that all men are latent and future Bodhisattvas also corresponds to the Vedantic conception that the individual (Jīva) is identical with the Absolute (Brahman). If at first Mahayana puts Nirvana and Samsāra in opposition to each other and contrasts the misery and suffering of the world (samsāra) with the Peace of Nirvana, it later realises that the absoluteness of Nirvana will be lost if it is opposed to anything and that it itself will be a member of the opposition,

and therefore teaches that Nirvana is Samsāra and Samsāra is Nirvana. The Absolute Truth includes everything within it and nothing is opposed to it. Samsāra also is included and merged in Nirvana. The Peace of Nirvana transcends—includes and goes beyond—the misery and suffering of Samsāra. This also corresponds to the Vedantic transcendence and the inclusion and merging of the world in Brahman. This is why suchness is also described as non-dualistic. The conception of the Dharmakāya as distinguished from the Nirmāṇakāya (the historical Buddha) and the Sambhogakāya or the Body of Bliss enjoyed by the Bodhisattvas, shows the real essence of the Buddhist teaching. "It is not an individual reality, it is not a false existence, but is universal and pure. It comes from nowhere, it goes to nowhere. It is for ever serene and eternal. It is the One devoid of all determinations."[1] The Dharmakāya is the '*raison d' être* of all beings', 'transcends all modes of *upāya*' and it stands 'outside the pale of our private understanding'. When necessary it assumes the *sambhogakāya* for the benefit of the Bodhisattvas and the Nirmāṇakāya for ordinary mortals. The Buddhists consider all religious leaders of mankind as the Body of Transformation of the Dharmakāya.

The charge that the Buddhist works for his own individual salvation cannot be brought at all against the Mahayanist. The distinction between the Hinayana ideal of the Ārhat who has his own individual salvation for his end and the Mahayana ideal of the Bodhisattva who wishes to help all creatures and bring them to full enlightenment, and although qualified for Nirvana, voluntarily renounces it in order to remain in the world to help all creatures in the world shows the advance that Buddhism attained in its Mahayana School. Mahayana represents the esoteric truth in Buddhism and the realisation that there is something beyond the universe, something beyond this world of relative truth, something transcending the body and the mind, something that is eternal and absolute, something that is of the nature of Pure Spirit, Pure Knowledge and Pure Enlightenment, something that is absolute Peace and transcendent Bliss, something that is

[1] Suzuki: *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, pp. 222-23.

sublime and serene, something that is cool and transparent, something that is unhampered by any opposition and hindrance, is unmistakably there and it undoubtedly gains for Buddhism a sure place amongst the noblest and the purest faiths in the world. We shall have occasion to show that there are esoteric elements in all religions, Vedantism representing the esoteric truth of Hinduism, Sufism of Islam, the Johannian Gospel of Christianity and Taoism of the religion of China. The Buddhist doctrine is pure and simple and is bound to appeal to all sincere seekers of truth. A life of pure and noble morality, free from superstition and prejudice, free from the tyranny and oppression of ritualism and priestcraft, free from the burden and imposition of the scriptures, is recommended. All suffering is explained to be due to *taṇhā* or *tṛṣṇā*, to the 'eager yearning thirst' after life, to the Desire for the things of the world. Suffering ceases as soon as Desire is overcome and the thirst is quenched. "He who overcomes this contemptible thirst (difficult to be conquered in this world), sufferings fall off from him like water-drops from a lotus leaf."[1] Buddha prescribes a thorough moral training for attaining the state of desirelessness. "I devote myself wholly to moral culture so as to arrive at the highest condition of moral rest (the highest Nirvana)"[2]—this is what the Buddha says. The moral discipline, the regulated moral life is not the final thing, but is only a preparation for a higher stage, is only a means to the attainment of the *summum bonum*. *Ahimsâ*—not hurting any creature, *Satya*—avoiding untruth of every kind, *Asteya*—not stealing or thinking of stealing anything at any place or at any time and *Brahmacarya*—the life of perfect chastity, are obligatory. Besides these, the drinking of intoxicating liquors, the taking of unseasonable food at nights, habits of luxury like wearing garlands or using perfumes or sleeping on soft beds, are also forbidden. Although extreme torture or mortification of the body is forbidden, care is taken to see that the body is always controlled and regulated and is never allowed to have its

1 *Dhammapada*, verse 336.
2 *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, p. 183.

own way. The law of Karma holds a very important position in Buddhism. The Buddhist denies the reality of the individual self and but for the law of Karma would have cut off the ground of religion altogether. Karma is the link between one life and another and the belief, that a man reaps as he sows and that what he is suffering or enjoying in this life is all due to his past actions in another life and that his actions in the present life will determine his happiness or misery in future lives, really serves the purpose of a permanent enduring self. The dread of future suffering and the hope of future happiness do not allow man to act as he pleases and serve as a check to his impulses. The Law of Karma takes the place of Providence and moral governor of the universe and is a suitable substitute for the self on the one hand and God on the other. Buddhism as a religion does not suffer in the least for its denial of Soul and God because of its unfailing confidence in the law of Karma. Buddha took advantage of the firm faith of the masses in the law of Karma and found it possible to preach a religion without saying anything about God and the Soul, because so long as the working of the law of Karma is not doubted or denied, there is no necessity for a permanent entity like the Soul or a moral governor like God. The moral order is an absolute order that allows no exceptions and does not show any leniency in favour of any one; the law of Karma is a stern ruler that holds absolute sway. The law of Karma is the combination of the moral and the physical order and so long as the question as to how the combination or the correspondence is effected is not raised, it is an effective substitute for God and serves the purpose of exoteric religion very well.

There are four stages in the Enlightened Path or the Excellent Way which says that "When these noble truths are grasped and known, the craving for existence is rooted out, that which leads to renewed existence is destroyed, and then there is no more birth." [1] The four stages are (1) The stage of the *Sotāpanna* or one who has entered the stream; (2) The stage of one who will return only once to this world—the

[1] *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, Ch. II, 2.

Sakṛidāgāmin; (3) The stage of the *Anāgāmin* or one who will not be reborn in the world of living men but may be born once among gods; (4) The stage of the *Ārhat* who is completely free from error, free from delusion and ignorance, and is never born again either amongst gods or amongst men. He sees the values of all things at their proper worth, and evil desires are completely rooted out from his mind. His mind is filled with compassion and love for his fellow-beings. Although the Buddhist texts speak of the stage of the *Asekha* as beyond that of the Ārhat, there seems to be a natural transition from the one to the other and the bliss of liberation begins to be felt at the stage of the Ārhat. Life in the form of a human being is a great blessing and very difficult to be attained as full possibilities for gaining Ārhatship or Bodhisattvahood are given to every human being. No time is to be spent in vain and the right moment is to be seized for the purpose and is never to be allowed to slip away. The stage of the liberated Ārhat is thus described in the Dhammapada: "To him who has finished the Path, and passed beyond sorrow, who has freed himself on all sides, and thrown away every fetter, there is no more fever of grief." "For such there are no more births. Tranquil is the mind, tranquil the words and deeds of him who is thus tranquilised and made free by wisdom."[1] "They, having obtained the fruit of the fourth Path, and *immersed themselves in that ambrosia*, have received without price and are *in the enjoyment of Nirvana*." Do the above descriptions suggest in any way that Nirvana is utter extinction? Certainly it means the extinction of the Karma process, extinction of the cycle of births and deaths which arises from and is rooted in desires. With the extinction of the cause, *viz.*, desire, there is extinction of its effect, *viz.*, enjoyment or suffering of the mind and the body in the form of births and rebirths. If Nirvana means extinction, it is extinction of hoarded desires, extinction of the Karmic cycle, extinction of phenomenal existence, and not extinction of noumenal and real existence. It is said that when Nirvana is attained old karmas are exhausted and no new karma is produced.

[1] Verses 90 & 96.

There is thus cessation of the Karmic process. But along with this negative moment, there is the positive experience of perfect peace, bliss and perfect knowledge. The Buddhist conceptions of Nirvana and Parinibbana seem to be exactly identical with the Vedantic conceptions of Jīvanmukti and Videhamukti. "When a Buddhist has become an Arhat, when he has reached Nirvana, the fruit of the fourth Path, he has extinguished *upādāna* and *kleśa* (error), but *he is still alive.*" This is the stage of the Jīvanmukta according to the Vedantist. He enjoys perfect peace and bliss but lives and moves like an ordinary mortal. But the *upādi*, the Skandhas, the body with all its powers are all impermanent and they soon pass away. "There will then be nothing left to bring about the rise of a new set of Skandhas, of a new individual, and the Arhat will be no longer alive or existent in any sense at all; he will have reached Parinibbana, complete extinction or Nir-upādi-sesa nibbānadhātu, extinction not only of Tanhā and of the fires of passion, but also of the upādi and the five Skandhas." This is the stage of the Videhamukta of the Vedantist. There is absolutely no difference between the two conceptions. While perfect peace is experienced holding the bodily frame, it is Nirvana or Jīvanmukti; when the body falls there is Videhamukti or Parinibbana. The *summum bonum* is the experience of perfect peace and perfect bliss undisturbed by any influence coming from the body or the mind, and this state is attained equally in Nirvana as well as in Parinibbana. Buddhism loses all meaning and significance if Nirvana is interpreted to mean extinction of the soul along with that of the body, extinction of consciousness along with that of the fires of passion, extinction of the essence along with that of the excrescence. The experience of the void or emptiness as is contained in the *prajnaparamita mantram*, "*gate, gate, para gate, parasamgate, bodhi svaha*" (O Bodhi, gone, gone, gone to the other shore, landed at the other shore, svaha) is the direct revelation of the transcendent consciousness in whose presence the *values* set on the things of the world reduce themselves to nothingness and is not the desperate and desolate cry of the dying man doomed to annihilation. It is the proclamation of the victory of the spirit over the body,

the victory of the abiding and the eternal over the fleeting and the transitory. The elaborate threefold discipline, Morality, Meditation and Wisdom, the faith in the Grace of a Buddha, in the conception of the Amitabha, in the conception of the Bodhisattva working for the salvation of all, the practice of universal love and charity,—all lose their significance if they all lead to utter annihilation and total extinction.

7—1917 B.

C—Jainism

Jainism believes in transmigration and in the unrestricted working of the law of Karma. It does not believe in the existence of God and regards belief in the traditional God as not only unnecessary but positively injurious to the interests of genuine religion. The Jainas hold that a correct understanding of the principles of causality and phenomenology dispenses with the necessity of any divine intervention in the affairs of the world and that "the very attempt to posit an all-ruling extra-mundane God is to conceal the ignorance of the true principle of causality under a pomp of delusive reasonings".[1] They seem to be rather proud of their position that it does not cast them "into the moulds of those weaklings who love to creep with a quivering prayer on their lips to the silent doors of the Deity" and that it makes them feel that they are 'independent autonomous individuals' who can carve out paths for themselves here and hereinafter by their 'own will and exertion'. It is interesting to note that they never regard themselves as atheists although they do not believe in an extra-mundane Personal God. They believe in a spiritual principle and they do believe that this spiritual principle is pure and perfect in itself and that however imperfect and impure it may appear due to its association with matter, it is possible to emancipate it from its bondage and to realise it in its purity, perfection, freedom and blessedness. The Jaina worships this Ideal as embodied in their Tīrthaṅkaras, the pure and perfect souls, corresponding to the Ārhats and Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist system of thought, and as there is worship of the spiritual essence, it is worship of God whether they call it by that name or not. The law of Karma does the work of Providence as we have seen in the case of Buddhism and serves the purpose of exoteric religion. The conception of the Jīvanmukta or the Tīrthaṅkara supplies the Ideal and acts as the esoteric element in the religion. The perfected soul has hardly any difference with God so far as purity and freedom are

1 Ghosh and Nahar: *An Epitome of Jainism*, p. 258.

concerned, and as moral government of the universe is performed by the law of Karma, the Jaina, like the Bauddha, does not feel the necessity of God.

Some of the metaphysical doctrines are the same in Buddhism and Janism. It is Karma that is responsible for bondage and suffering, and emancipation or *moksha* consists in complete deliverance from the veil and covering of Karma. It is Karma that places us in the simply endless cycle of births and re-births and unless there is escape from Karma, the cycle of births and re-births cannot be avoided. Right vision, right knowledge and right conduct are helpful to the realisation of the end. *Moksha* or Emancipation is not a product or effect of any action. That which is the product of anything is bound to be non-permanent (anitya), and as *moksha* is permanent and eternal, it cannot be supposed to be the resultant of anything; it is the realisation of the self as it is by its very nature, and this becomes possible only when the Karma of the Jīva has been exhausted. *Jīvasya kṛtakarmakshayena yat svarupāvasthānam tanmokshaḥ.* This is exactly the position of the Upanishads. If *Moksha* is not eternal and permanent, if there is again a falling off from *moksha*, it is nothing, and if *moksha* is to be permanent, it cannot be supposed to be produced by anything. So it cannot be anything but Svarupāvasthāna —a resting in its essence. The so-called aids are only helpful in removing the veil and not in producing or effecting the liberation. Jainism is fully conscious of the wide difference between Karma and Jñāna and does not commit the mistake of supposing that knowledge is effected through Karma or action. *Moksha* or freedom is the *Swabhāva*, the inherent constitution and essence of the soul and is not to be supposed as generated in the Soul through the action of anything else.

Jainism gives a very prominent place, like Buddhism, to moral discipline and very often it seems that it is a religion which has nothing beyond morality. There is no denying the fact that in Buddhism and Jainism as well as in Confucianism, the purification of the individual self is the ideal that has been aimed at. It is the first stage in the realisation of the Supreme Truth and has been mentioned

in Vedantism as the *Śuddhi* or purification of the *Tvam*, the subject. The purification of the object comes later and is mentioned in Vedantism as the *Śuddhi* of the *tat*. In Jainism and Buddhism as well as in Confucianism, there is no mention of God or universal consciousness. The universal self that is present in everything is not realised and the presence of such a consciousness is not even suspected. The ideal is the purified self, the Buddha or the Tīrthaṅkara or the Jina. Buddhism and Jainism are Yogic disciplines, systems of Yoga which aim at withdrawing from the object and realising the self within undisturbed by any influence from without and dissociated from all *upādhis* or adjuncts. Although it is a great advance to pass from polytheism and animism and nature worship to the recognition of the spirit within and regarding it as the true God that is worthy of reverence and worship, it falls much short of the theistic realisation of the presence of the Personal God or the universal consciousness concretised and embodied in a living form. The Personal God of theism is not an arbitrary and whimsical ruler who accepts bribes and listens to and grants the prayers of the worshippers and is not the ideal of the weaklings, as is supposed by Jainism, but is the universal consciousness or spirit that manifests itself in and through all objects and overcomes all barriers between the 'within' and the 'without', between the subject and the object. The distinction between Nature and Spirit, between an alien object and a subject, is realised at this stage to be a misconception, and Nature is found to be the embodiment of the Spirit. As Spirit is realised to be pervading entire Nature and as Nature is conceived to be not alien to Spirit, there is no longer any necessity for withdrawal in order to retire to the domain of the Spirit and enjoy its peace, but the Spirit, the universal consciousness is realised everywhere with eyes wide open as well as with eyes closed. In the Vedantic realisation of the Absolute, there is the identity of the *tat* and the *tvam*, of the universal and the individual self, and this identification means a transcendent experience which passes beyond the stage of religion demanding communion with a Personal God which is beyond any dualistic experience and is absolutely non-dualistic, all-

absorbing, all-harmonising in character. We shall attempt to elaborate this point when we discuss the Personal and the supra-Personal concepts and we refrain from discussing it further at this stage.

While the course of moral discipline, the belief in transmigration and in the law of Karma, the denial of a Personal God, the revolt against the authority of the Vedas and their prescriptions and injunctions, the rebellion against Brahminical tyranny and oppression and the open hostility to unmeaning rites and ceremonies are common factors in Buddhism and Jainism, there is one important difference. Although both have emancipation or *moksha* as their aim and both regard deliverance from the snare of karma and the consequent deliverance from the cycle of births and deaths to be the essence of *moksha* and both hold that it is ignorance that is the cause of bondage and suffering and that right knowledge alone can dispel ignorance and prepare the way for emancipation, the Buddhist thinks there must be the extinction of the individual self, there must be the extinction of the illusion that there is the individual self before there can be emancipation, but the Jaina holds that the stage of *mukti* or emancipation is nothing but the purified state of the individual self. The individual self is not only to be not extinct, not only to be not perceived as illusory but is on the other hand to be realised as absolute peace and perfection, as absolute freedom and absolute bliss, as the absolute reality that endures for ever, and is by its very nature pure and unaffected by its contact with matter. Contact with matter is not inherent in the constitution of the spirit and is not its essence; it is only accidental and *aupādhīc* which is removable and is actually removed through right vision, right knowledge and right conduct. The Jaina notion of the self is identical with the Samkhya conception; only it falls short of the Vedantic conception of the Absolute and of the identity of the individual and the universal. The dawning of the universal consciousness is not noticeable in the Jaina conception; otherwise the self is conceived of as *nitya* (eternal), *śuddha* (pure), *buddha* (enlightened) and *mukta* (free). It thus corresponds unmistakably to the Samkhya-Yoga conception and is to be taken on a par with

the Yogic discipline and the systems which rely on withdrawal from Nature for the realisation of the ultimate reality. The Buddhist theory preaches in opposition to the Jaina conception that there is no such thing as the individual self and that in *moksha* or Nirvana there must be extinction of the individual self or at least a complete deliverance from the illusion that there is such a thing as the individual self. This, at least, is the teaching on the surface. Whether the Buddhist recognises such a thing as the universal self, whether his conception of the Nirvana is something positive, whether the Mahayana conception of the identity of the individual and the Absolute and of every human being as the latent Bodhisattva is the correct version of Buddhism or not, there is no doubt that according to Buddhism individuality is an illusion. There is the possibility of an interpretation of Buddhism, at least of Mahayana Buddhism, on Vedantic lines. When individuality is recognised to be an illusion there is the dawning of the universal consciousness. The Void or the Śūnya is not the absolute Blank but the Great Absolute which transcends all finite determination and negation; it may be the full and the perfect and the Śūnyatā is only the absence of all finitude. Buddhism admits of an absolutistic as well as of a nihilistic interpretation; Jainism is neither nihilism nor absolutism. The Jaina never denies the self and does not leave room for the existence of the Absolute.

Jainism, though it revolts against the authority of the Vedas, is not so inimical to Hinduism as Buddhism is. Unlike Buddhism it lays great stress on the value of penance (tapasyā) and prescribed *bāhya tapas* or external and physical austerities as well as *antaranga tapas* or internal or psychical austerities. Under *bāhya tapas* or physical austerities, it includes (1) *Anaśana Vrata* or the practice of fasting which purifies the sense-organs and adds to their sensibility so that it makes them respond to fine and delicate vibrations, (2) *Ūnodari* or avoidance of full meals, (3) *Vṛtti-Saṁkshepa* or restrictions regarding meals, (4) *Rasatyāga* or renunciation of palatable articles, (5) *Kāyakleśa* or endurance of physical suffering and accommodation to oppressive heat and biting cold, (6) *Saṁlīnata* or turning the senses away from their

respective objects. The *antaranga tapas* include (1) *Prāyaścitta* or penance and repentance including moral confessions; (2) *Vinaya* or humility including (*a*) *Jñāna vinaya*—humility to all who are superior in knowledge, (*b*) *Darśan vinaya*—humility to those who have seen the truth, (*c*) *Charitra vinaya*—humility to those who are morally elevated, (*d*) *Mana-vinaya*—the mental attitude of humility to the saints and sages who live for others; (3) *Vaiyāvritva* or service to humanity; (4) *Svādhyāya*—the study of Jaina scriptures; (5) *Vyutsarga* or discrimination between the soul and the not-soul and (6) *Dhyāna* or meditation which is of four kinds, (*a*) *Ārta* or the meditation of one who is in distress, (*b*) *Raudra* or absorption in the thought of wreaking vengeance on others, (*c*) *Dharmadhyāna* or constant meditation on the ways and means to the realisation of the true nature of the self, and (*d*) *Sukladhyāna* or meditation on the purity and perfection of the real self.

Jainism still holds many of the beliefs of Hinduism and much of its worship exactly resembles Hindu worship. Although it is a revolt against Brahminical supremacy and the distinctions of caste, it is interesting to note that Jainism is not so vehement in its protest as Buddhism is against the caste system in practice and many of its *domestic* chaplains though not its temple officiants are still Brahmins. But for its exclusive emphasis on *ahiṁsā* or the vow of not hurting any creature and the unusual attention paid to it to follow it in practice, the daily life of a Jaina closely resembles that of a Hindu, and there is a great deal of similarity between the teachings of the Hindu and the Jaina Scriptures. The Jaina does not think that emancipation or *Moksha* is not possible for a householder or a layman. Although Jainism has its monasteries and monks, it has also many lay disciples or *Śrāvakas*. Buddhism lays great emphasis on the life of the monk and although it does not altogether close the doors against householders it never forgets that the life of the Bhikshu is the ideal. One chief characteristic of Jainism is its spirit of compromise and it is noticeable throughout its career that it does not want to overthrow the existing social order but it is anxious to preach its doctrines without effecting a definite breach with the existing state of things. This is

what more than anything else distinguishes Buddhism from Jainism. If Brahminism centres round the conception of the Soul, the first task of Buddhism seems to be to deny its existence. Whether it accepts the existence of the Soul in another way or not, it has to make a show of its difference with the prevalent conception. If Hinduism prescribes a life of penance and austerities as essential to the realisation of truth, the Buddha proclaims the futility of these practices. The Buddha declares that the truth he is preaching was not known to the Brahmins, not even to their forefathers. The language in which he speaks clearly shows the spirit of rebellion and his definite breach with Hinduism. It is said that Jainism could not withstand the Mohammedan deluge which swept over India in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; "Jain temples were razed to the ground, their sacred books burnt and their monastic communities massacred". But it is to be noticed that whereas 'Buddhism was simply swept out of India proper altogether by the storm', Jainism was able to re-appear once more as it was firmly rooted amongst the laity. It is the spirit of compromise that saved Jainism from disaster and is responsible for the position that it still occupies in India; and it is because of its conservatism that, unlike Buddhism, it never spread beyond the borders of India.

Two centuries after the death of Mahavira, Jainism became divided into two important sects—the Svetambaras and the Digambaras. The division is not based on important doctrinal differences and does not exactly represent the distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrines as is the case with Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism. It is said that a great famine lasting for twelve years visited the part of the country known as Magadha where Jainas lived. In view of the gravity of the situation, Bhadravāhu, the then head of the Jainas, led a section of the community to the South leaving Sthulavadra in charge of the section that remained behind. During the famine, the Jaina monks began to forget the Siddhanta and felt the necessity of collecting the canons or the sacred texts. At a council held at Pataliputra while Bhadravāhu was still absent in the South, the canons were actually collected. At this time the original practice of going

abroad naked was abandoned and the monks began to wear white robes. When the original party who had emigrated to the South came back to Magadha, they refused to accept the canons collected at the Council of Pataliputra and did not approve of being clad in white robes. They continued the practice of going about naked and styled themselves as Digambaras in distinction from the Svetamvaras or those who wore white robes. The most important difference between the two sects centres round the question as to whether nudity is essential or not to the attainment of perfection. The Digambaras believe that the person who attains *Kevalajñāna* (perfect knowledge) is above all passions and appetites and does not require food and clothing. The Svetambaras think that although a *Kevalajñānī* may not be under any necessity of wearing clothes, still he should not make his appearance in society without clothing himself in white robes. Another point of difference also follows from the first. The Digambaras hold that women cannot attain salvation unless they are born again as men and exclude women from their order. The Svetambaras who clad themselves in white robes and never go about unclothed hold that men and women are equally entitled to attain *Kevalajñāna* and *Nirvana*. There are other minor points of difference between the two sects but none of them shows any essential doctrinal divergence.

Not only in practice but also in their philosophy, the Jainas show their spirit of compromise, and their *anekāntavāda* and the *saptabhangi naya* are glaring evidences of their liberal point of view and their open-mindedness. The story of six blind men getting hold of six different parts of the body of an elephant and forming altogether different estimates of the object experienced is intended to illustrate that a system of philosophy which looks at things from one point of view like each of the six blind men has only a partial truth in its possession but a philosophy which, like Jainism, looks at things from all points of view is in possession of the complete truth like the owner of the elephant. Jainism has no difficulty in harmonising the *Satkāryavāda* and the *Asatkāryavāda*. It holds that from one point of view the effect resides wholly in the cause and that from another point

of view the effect is something new and does not reside in the cause. When attention is fixed on the *upādāna* or the material, it is evident that the effect is nothing but the cause transformed; but when one looks to the form, the modification or the *vikāra* itself, it cannot but appear that there is something new in the effect. The Jaina comprehensiveness is seen very clearly in its *Saptabhangi Naya.* You can affirm the existence of a thing from one point of view (Syād Asti), deny it from another (Syād Nāsti) and affirm both existence and non-existence with regard to it at different times (Syād Asti Nāsti). If you are to think of it as existing and non-existing from the same point of view at the same time, it becomes unspeakable (Syād Avaktavyah). Under certain circumstances, the affirmation of existence along with its indescribability becomes possible (Syād asti Avaktavyah); under certain circumstances, again, the negation of existence along with its indescribability becomes possible (Syād nāsti Avaktavyah) and it may also be that one speaks of its existence as well as of its non-existence and also that it is unspeakable (Syād Asti Nāsti Avaktavyah). The Jaina recognises that every dogmatic assertion from a particular and limited standpoint is false and that there should be an unlimited open-mindedness to accept the truth from whatever direction it comes; the *Saptabhangi Naya* shows the comprehensiveness of its logic.

Although the Jaina has his definite and original contribution in the field of logic and philosophy, his main concern seems to be his religion. He is always anxious to find out the ways and means to deliver himself from his transitory imprisonment in the *pudgala* and to enjoy the limitless serenity of the *mukta* or the *tīrthaṅkara.* A brief discussion of the Nine Categories will give us an idea of the Jaina view and will show us the emphasis it gives to details. The nine categories are Jiva, Ajiva, Puṇya, Pāpa, Āśrava, Samvara, Bandha, Nirjāra and Moksha.

The Jaina conception of Jiva has been arrived, Dr. Jacobi thinks "not through the search after the self, the self-existing unchangeable principle in the ever-changing world of phenomena, but through the perception of *life.* For the most general Jaina term for soul is life (Jiva) which

is identical with self". The way in which the category of life is divided and sub-divided, Dr. Sinclair Stevenson rightly remarks, "building up from the lesser to the more developed life", certainly bears out Dr. Jacobi's contention. The Jaina thinks that whilst the knowledge gained by the Jiva may be infinite, the Jiva itself is finite and limited. Unlike the Buddhists, the Jainas hold that the Soul is a permanent substance which enjoys or suffers the fruits of its deeds and goes through the succession of births and re-births so long as it is associated with *pudgala* (matter) and finally becomes emancipated through extinction of its Karma.

Jiva is divided into two classes—Siddha (perfected) and Saṁsāṛī (unperfected). The saṁsārī Jivas are still struggling because of their contact with Ajiva (insentient matter) and passing through the cycle of births and deaths. The Siddhas are those who have attained perfection and are free from Karmas and enjoy perfect bliss.

Jivas have also been divided into four classes according to their places of abode—(1) Nāraki Jivas are those who are born in hell, (2) Tiryānc Jivas are the sub-human forms—insects, birds, reptiles, plants and animals, (3) the Manuṣyas or the human beings and (4) the Devatās or the spirits.

Jivas have been clasified into (1) Ekendriya Jivas (2) Be-indriya Jivas (3) Tri-indriya Jivas (4) Corendriya Jivas and (5) Pañchendriya Jivas according as they possess one or two or three or four or five sense-organs.

The second category of the Jaina is the *Ajiva* or what is opposed to Jiva (life). Pudgala is one particular division of Ajiva which may roughly be translated as Matter. The union of Jiva with Ajiva, of Spirit with Matter, is never such that their separation is not possible. In fact, emancipation or Moksha of the individual consists in the separation of the pudgala (matter) from spirit. Ajiva is divided into two main classes—Arūpi (formless) and Rūpi (with form). Arūpi Ajiva has four sub-divisions: (1) Dharmāstikāya, (2) Adharmāstikāya, (3) Ākāsastikāya and (4) Kāla. Rūpi Ajiva contains Pudgalāstikāya which possesses colour, smell, taste and form.

The third category is *Puṇya* or merit and the fourth is *Pāpa* or demerit. It is a matter of regret that Jaina ethics

has been put in opposition to Buddhist ethics and its superiority has been shown in a way which is not only unfair but incorrect, by men professing to give a correct account of Jainism. Speaking of Buddhism, Nahar and Ghosh say, "Such a philosophical speculation, by the perfect frankness with which it eulogises the life of momentary experience and undermines the importance of calculating wisdom so essential in life, takes away from man what is of worth and dignity to him and thus bears its own condemnation". I have never found it stated anywhere that the Buddhist system of ethics does not recognise the worth and dignity of man and that its philosophy of momentariness has undermined its ethics and that it has made "the claim of the present, even of the momentary present imperious and supreme beyond all others". We have shown before that the acceptance of the iron rule of the law of Karma and its belief in transmigration make it impossible to live the life of "eat, drink and be merry" and practically serve all the purpose of moral government and Providence. The point on which the joint authors of the book lay so much emphasis is that while the Jaina recognises the existence of the soul, the Buddhist does not believe in its existence. But it should be remembered that the Skandhas and the other ingredients of the empirical self, do persist after the gross body perishes and that what is necessary for ethics, *viz.*, virtue and vice, merit and demerit, is clearly saved and is no less important in the Buddhist system as it is in the Jaina philosophy. There is absolutely no distinction between Jaina and Buddhist ethics and the moral life is prescribed in both with the same emphasis as leading to Nirvana or Moksha. It is a false gratification for the Jaina authors to think that the ethics of their system is superior to that of Buddhism believing as they do in the substantiality of the Soul. The sermon that Mahavira preached to his disciple Gautama Indrabhuti regarding the momentariness of life is very similar to what the Buddha told his disciples to seize the right moment and to make the best use of the life they had been blest with. Mahavira tells his disciple that life will end sometime, even as the withered leaf of a tree must fall to the ground when its days are at an end, and that its duration is as brief as that of a

dew-drop clinging to a blade of grass. It is only in being born as a human being that one has the chance of getting oneself rid of one's Karmas; the opportunity is indeed a rare opportunity; for one's soul 'might have been imprisoned for aeons in an earth or a fire or a wind body' or it might have got a plant or an insect or an animal body, or one might have been born as a god or a demon, but it is only to a human being that the chance of liberation is open. Even if one is born as a man, one may not have the opportunity of hearing and believing the Law and choosing the life of asceticism. Mahavira asks his disciple to press on to the very end saying "You have crossed the great ocean, why do you halt so near the shore? Make haste to get on the other side and reach that world of perfection (Nirvana) where there is safety and perfect happiness".[1] As a result of the hearing of this sermon it is recorded that the disciple was able to cut off his ties and reach perfection. The Buddha's teaching to his disciples are all in this vein and if the name and the context be not disclosed, it might very well pass for one of Buddha's sermons. The ideal that the Buddha holds before his disciples is noble and sublime, and it is nothing short of debasing the pen and the ink with which it is written if it is stated that "the *summum bonum* of life is here (in Jainism) not the gratuitous enjoyment of the present in utter disregard of the future as *Buddhists* hold",[2] or that the present is not utilised and given any importance because of its ideal of nihilism or that there is no conception of hope and real love or charity in Buddhism. The statements of interested parties should not find a place in world literature and deserve condemnation from all quarters for the sake of the benefit of humanity. Is there anything anywhere in Buddhist records which shows that it recommends the hedonistic view of life and that it has nothing in view beyond the momentary present? Is there anything to prove that the Buddhist conception of love and charity is inferior to any other?

It will be readily seen that the Jaina excels in going into the minutest details if we just give below a list of Puṇyas and

[1] Sermon entitled "The Leaf of the Tree". S.B.E.XIV, p. 46.

[2] Ghosh and Nahar: *An Epitome of Jainism*, p. 468.

Pāpas, Merits and Demerits and show a brief outline of its classification of Karmas. The nine Puṇyas are :—(1) Annapuṇya or merit accruing from giving food to hungry people, (2) Pānapuṇya or giving water to the thirsty, (3) Vastrapuṇya or giving clothes to the poor, especially to the monks, (4) Layanapuṇya—building or lending a house to a monk, (5) Śayanapuṇya—providing beds, (6) Manapuṇya or wishing well of everyone, (7) Śārīrapuṇya—exerting oneself to render service to others or to save life, (8) Vacanapuṇya or speaking that hurts nobody and (9) Namaskārapuṇya or reverent salutations. The Jainas believe that there are forty-two ways in which the fruits of the puṇyakarmas may be enjoyed. As regards the pāpas or demerits, Jīvahiṁsā or the taking away of any life is the most heinous of all crimes. The Jainas make a distinction between actual killing (dravya hiṁsā) and desiring death or harm to others (Bhāva hiṁsā). Actual killing is absolutely forbidden and it is binding on Jainas of every sect. It is interesting to note that even its conception of 'Bhāva ahiṁsā' or 'not even contemplating any injury to others' is not original and is to be found as early as Vyāsa's commentary on the Pātañjala Sūtras. It is not to be supposed that *ahiṁsā*, and other moral disciplines were inculcated by Jainism and Buddhism; the fact is that they laid special emphasis on *ahiṁsā*, and Jainism made rather a fetish of it. The Jaina recognises seventeen other sins over and above *ahiṁsā*. They are (1) Asatya—untruthfulness, (2) Adattādana—dishonesty, (3) Abrahmacarya—unchastity, (4) Parigraha or covetousness, (5) Krodha or anger, (6) Māna or conceit, (7) Māyā or deceit and cheating, (8) Lobha or avarice, (9) Rāga or attachment, (10) Dveṣa or hatred and envy, (11) Kleśa or quarrelsomeness, (12) Abhyākhyāna or slander, (13) Paiśunya or telling stories to discredit a person, (14) Nindā or finding fault with others, (15) Rati, arati or lack of self-control, (16) Māyāmṛṣā or hypocrisy and (17) Mithyādarśana śalya or false faith.

The Jainas recognise two principal divisions of Karmas —(*a*) The Ghātin Karma or Action currents of injury and (*b*) Aghātin Karma or the Action currents of non-injury. The Ghātin Karma retards the unfoldment of the psychical possibilities and is actually harmful to the progress of the

individual. The Aghātin Karma is not harmful and is regarded as non-injurious. The Ghātin Karmas can be destroyed only with great labour and include (1) Jñānāvaraṇīya or those which impede knowledge, (2) Darśanāvaraṇīya or those which impede right vision, (3) Mohanīya or those which delude the Jīva due to his attachments and (4) Antarāya Karma or what is injurious to evolution and progress. The Aghātin Karmas include (1) Āyus karma or what determines the longevity of the individual, (2) Nāma karma or what determines the colour and configuration of the Soul's physical organism, (3) Gotra karma or what determines the individual's birth in a certain family and (4) Vedanīya karma or what determines the sensations of pleasure and pain. It is interesting to note that the Jaina mentions 9 kinds of Darśanāvaraṇīya Karma, 5 kinds of Jñānāvaraṇīya Karma, 28 kinds of Mohanīya and 5 kinds of Antarāya Karma. There are 4 kinds of Āyus, 103 kinds of Nāma, 2 kinds of Gotra and 2 kinds of Vedanīya Karma making a total of 158 kinds of Karma in all.

The fifth category is that of Āśrava or Influx which deals with the way in which Karma is acquired by the Soul. The Jaina mentions forty-two chief channels or Āśrava through which karma enters a jīva. The sixth category is *Saṁvara* or stoppage which shows how the inflow of karma into the soul can be impeded. The Jaina mentions fifty-seven ways of impeding karma, which include discipline with regard to walking, speaking, eating, sitting and clothing and disposing of rubbish and refuse, controlling movements of the body, taking a vow of silence or controlling speech, practising forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, greedlessness, austerity, restraint, truthfulness, purity and cleanliness, never looking on anything as one's own, celibacy and chastity, the twelve Bhāvanās or meditations or reflections including those on the impermanence of worldly things and one's helplessness and the ways and means of escape and the twenty-two items of endurance or Parishahas. The seventh category is that of *Bandha* or Bondage which is caused by the union of the soul with *pudgala* which is roughly translated as matter. When the soul is attacked by passions like anger and love, it takes

on *pudgala* particles fit for the bondage of karmas. It is the union with the *pudgala* that causes bondage and severance or deliverance from the *pudgala* results in emancipation. *Nirjarā* is the eighth category which shows how accumulated or *sañcita* karmas can be gradually destroyed. One of the principal ways of reducing the sum of karmas is by burning it up in the fire of austerities and the Jaina texts prescribe external (bāhya) and internal (ābhyantara) austerities for the purpose. The last and the ninth category is Moksha or emancipation. At this stage the individual becomes free from all karmas and rises above the cycle of repeated births and enjoys perfect bliss. He attains the highest form of knowledge, *viz.*, *kevalajñāna* (perfect knowledge) and becomes siddha or perfect. The Jainas recognise five kinds of knowledge (1) *Matijñāna* or sense knowledge, (2) *Śrutajñāna* or knowledge formed on the testimony of the omniscient, (3) *Abadhijñāna* or knowledge of what happened in the remote past, (4) *Manaparyāyajñāna* or knowledge of the thoughts of others and (5) *Kevalajñāna* or omniscience which is the highest kind of knowledge.

LECTURES V & VI

PERSONAL OR THEISTIC RELIGIONS: VAISHNAVISM, CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM

The full characteristics of what the ordinary man understands by religion are to be found only in the theistic schools. The conception of a God who not only punishes us for our sins but also looks to our welfare, who listens to our prayers and grants them, who is not a far-off abstract ideal but is a concrete person with whom we can hold living communion, who is the embodiment of all our cherished ideals and who represents the fulfilment of all our hopes and aspirations, who Himself takes a bodily form or sends His beloved son or His favourite angels for the redemption and salvation of mankind, who protects us from all sorts of evil and guides us safe to the goal through trials and tribulations, satisfies the spiritual needs of the religious soul very well. The common man does not here meet with any difficulty as he does when he is presented with the Impersonal Moral Ideal as the substitute for the Personal God or with the transcendent Supra-Personal Absolute which does not seem to have any interest in his dangers and difficulties, in his supplications and prayers, and in the damnation or redemption of his soul. It is no wonder that the members of the theistic schools should fail to appreciate the merits of Supra-Personal Religions or that they should be reluctant to regard the so-called Impersonal Religions as religion at all; nothing short of a Personal God can satisfy their religious craving and where, according to them, communion with the Personal God is wanting it may be anything else but it is certainly not religion.

There is an element of truth in the contention of the theists. In one sense, Buddhism, Jainism and Confucianism may be regarded as only preparations for the genuine religious experience. The moral consciousness and the moral discipline may be regarded as the beginnings of

religion involving the recognition of the importance of the spirit as we have seen in the earlier chapters, or these may be regarded as only the outer porch of the inner sanctuary of religion, as the mere approach to the inner temple where God resides. It is significant that the Buddha or Mahavira does not speak of God although both of them are eager for salvation. Both of them must have realised a peaceful and tranquil state of consciousness beneath the struggling waves, a state of absolute purity behind the surface impurities. There is not the least doubt that the state of tranquil and blissful purity as is experienced in Yogic Samādhi, undisturbed by impure thoughts and desires and by changing manifold states of consciousness, is regarded by them as the state of liberation. The whole course of discipline consists in passing from the state of impurity to that of purity, from the state of being in desire to the state of desirelessness, from the state of disharmony to the state of peace and tranquillity and harmony. It is evident that the individual is here the object of interest. If we leave the Mahayana out of account, there is hardly any reference to the Absolute, any reference to God, any reference to the universal consciousness. It will not be far from the truth if it is inferred that in Buddhism, Jainism and Confucianism we have only the purification of the subject, the *suddhi* of the *Tvam* as we have in the Yogic discipline and there is here no dawning of the Absolute, no passing from the *Tvam* to the *Tat*, from the individual to the universal. The elevated moral consciousness that prepares one for this transition is there, the preparation that enables one to take the leap is complete, but the leap is not actually taken as yet. Although morality is the indispensable preliminary step to religion, still religion is something more than morality. The dawning of the universal consciousness, the realisation of the Absolute as the source and sustainer of everything, the finding of God as the same in all, as the friend and helper and guide of all beings, is something more than the moral consciousness recognising the presence of the spirit in man. The individual freed from impurities has attained the fitness for the vision of God, but he has not yet actually seen God, the universal spirit

that is present in all. As contrasted with the so-called impersonal religions, the theistic schools may be supposed to have made this advance to the recognition of the universal spirit, if, of course, the realisation of God as the same in all, the same in birds and beasts, the same in the mountain as in the blade of grass, is actually there. In the first beginnings of morality, the spirit appears as the conscience in the individual; in the yogic disciplines and in the impersonal religions, the full consciousness of the pure spirit is there, but it is still only the individual spirit. It is only in the personal religions that the universal spirit, the Absolute, is first recognised fully and clearly. The individual spirit is not only pure now but it has recognised the universal spirit as the concrete embodiment of absolute truth and absolute purity. It has now taken the leap, it has got the expanded vision, it has attained an expansiveness whereby it has now in vision the Absolute spirit that is everywhere. A personal God who is the God of a chosen people only or who only speaks to a particular prophet is not actually the Universal Spirit or the Absolute which has been described above. If theism represents an expansive consciousness, it is because it conceives of God as present everywhere and as the same in all. If a religion makes a distinction between its own sect and another and thinks that its followers will be saved by God and others will not, it has not deserved the advance that is implied in the conception of the Personal God. The transition from the individual to the universal, the finding of God in everything, is the special characteristic of the theistic or personal religions. In the so-called impersonal religions, the emphasis has been laid on the purification of the subject, and the realisation of the pure spirit is consequent on withdrawal from the object. The subject is of the nature of consciousness and spirit is realised in the inmost recesses of the subject. The object is not recognised or realised to be of the nature of spirit and hence it is regarded as a barrier to the realisation of the spirit. It is because of this that an withdrawal from the object is regarded as necessary for absorption or concentration (Samādhi). The spirit is to be realised within in the inmost depths where the object

cannot create any ripples or offer any obstruction. At this stage the object is not only not realised to be the manifestation of the spirit but is rather regarded as alien to spirit. It marks a definite advance when the spirit is not only realised within with eyes closed in isolation from the objects of the world but is recognised and found in all the things of the world with eyes wide open. The Bhakti Schools of India have discussed this point in detail and have shown that the worship of God becomes meaningless if it does not involve the love of all beings. God is equally present in all things and beings of this universe and there cannot be adoration and worship of God or love and reverence to Him, if there is absence of love of fellow-beings or if there is hatred or jealousy on the part of the worshipper. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa expresses it clearly [1] :—

"I am present in all beings as their self; the man who worships me or my image and neglects them is entirely mistaken."

"He who neglects worshipping all creatures in whom I reside as their self and seeks to worship me or my image through foolishness acts like one offering oblations to the ashes (and not to the fire)."

"The mind of the conceited man who is inimical to others and therefore inimical to my own self and cherishes ill-feeling against others, never attains peace."

"I am not pleased with the person who worships me with various offerings, high and low, but insults and speaks ill of the creatures of this universe."

"One should worship my image only so long as one does not realise me in one's own self and as residing in the selves of all creatures."

Buddha and Mahavira could hardly have omitted the reference to the universal spirit lying at the heart of all things and to the blessed communion with it, if they wanted their followers to live the specifically religious life. As it is audacious to state that the great teachers had not themselves realised the Absolute Spirit, it has to be admitted that they did not want that men should be speaking of God in

[1] Book III. Chapter XXIX, Slokas 21—25.

season and out of season and not understand what belief in God implies. It would be infinitely better to spend entire lives for purification and preparation for the genuinely religious experience rather than fruitlessly pursue a course with high-sounding words and phrases having no corresponding realisation. The universal spirit which is represented by the term 'God' and which resides in all creatures can hardly be realised without the strictest moral purification. An uncommon love and charity must precede or at least accompany the realisation. It may be that because the Buddha perceived that men had been using terms the significance of which they failed to understand and had been thinking that they were believers in God which they really were not that out of infinite compassion for them he toiled ceaselessly for their real welfare and aimed at their purification and preparation which would ultimately secure the desired result. His silence about God and the Absolute or about the universal self must have been deliberate and he actually said that what had been considered to be beneficial had been revealed by him. It was not the special mission of the Buddha to teach men to live the specifically religious life but to prepare them for it and therefore he adopted silence about the higher topics.

The moral virtues for which endeavour was being made in the disciplinary or so-called impersonal religions attain their culmination and fruition and become concretely embodied in the conception of the Personal God. The Goddess who kills the Asuras and is the object of worship of the Śāktas is the total assemblage of all the gods without exception (Nihśeṣadevagaṇasamūhamūrti), the sum-total of all the moral excellences, the consummation of the virtues represented by the individual *devas* (gods) and is the Highest Spiritual Essence. The Personal God is no new thing unconnected with the past and is not an arbitrary or whimsical ruler. He represents all that is best and highest in the life of man and is the concrete embodiment of all his ideals. The man who possesses all the moral excellences, who has acquired all noble virtues (dharmāmṛta) and practises them sincerely and incessantly (paryupāsate), is the most beloved, the dearest and the best devotee of the Lord.

If God is the embodiment of the moral ideal, if He is Truth, Beauty and Goodness personified and if He is to be attained by His dearest devotee who combines in him all the noble virtues, it is not difficult to understand that the Buddha and the other moral teachers were not denying God and preaching against the Hindu Religion but were only eager to purge Hinduism of the evil that had grown around it and were only preparing men and purifying them so that they might experience the truth of religion for themselves. The Bhagavadgītā states that true Bhakti or the Highest devotion is attained by one who neither desires nor laments (na śocati na kāṅkshati), whose soul becomes transparent and serene and calm (prasannātmā) and who attains the widest and the most expansive consciousness (brahmabhūta) and *to whom all beings are equal.* The last is the crucial criterion of God-realisation. God is not a transcendent being to whom we can only make our offerings and send our prayers but with whom we can have no more intimate connection, but is equally present everywhere in all the things of the universe. God is what permeates everything of this universe and is to be realised as the Source and Sustainer and as the immanent principle of things. The God that is not present in all creatures and in all things is not the Absolute consciousness, the most expansive and all-pervading reality but is a mere abstraction. The God who is in Heaven or resides in the churches, mosques and temples, is not the God which the spiritual need of man seeks and is not competent to break the bonds of the individual and to enlarge his consciousness and lift him up to the level of the all-encompassing Absolute. The limitations of space and time which bind the individual and create duality and division are transcended only in the region of the Absolute and unless and until the consciousness of the all-pervading Absolute dawns upon the individual and it is realised that the whole of this universe including its minutest details is pervaded by God (īśābāsyamidam sarvam yat kiñcit jagatyām jagat), there is no rest for the individual. The devotee finds in every thing the body of the Lord and reaches the most expansive consciousness. When he closes his eyes, he finds Him everywhere. The distinction between the 'within' and

the 'without', the distinction between this and that, between the high and the low, between the large and the small, between the rich and the poor, becomes obliterated and everything appears to be equally grounded in God and to be His manifestation.

In Samkhya and Yoga, in Buddhism and Jainism, Nature is something alien to spirit, Prakriti is different from Purusha, and so the realisation of the spirit requires isolation and withdrawal from Nature. But in the personal religions, spirit is realised in Nature and is found to be dwelling in Nature. The immanence of the spirit in Nature may be regarded as the special teaching of the Bhakti Schools in India as well as of other personal religions. Real transcendence which is the special teaching of the Supra-Personal Religions, requires this immanence as an essential preliminary and unless the immanence of spirit in Nature is realised perfectly, there is no hope of understanding how spirit is beyond Nature. The spirit is to be realised first as different from Nature, next as immanent in Nature and finally as transcending and beyond Nature. Trancendence has no meaning apart from immanence. How can a thing go *beyond* if it is not that already, if it does not include it within itself? Very often this is forgotten and an unmeaning and useless controversy is set up between immanence and transcendence as if they are opposites. As we shall deal with it elaborately in a later chapter, we do not propose to pursue it further at this stage.

Love and charity are virtues which become automatic and spontaneous at this stage of realisation. The exhortation that we find in Buddhism is not at all necessary here. If one finds God everywhere, if every person is the manifestation of God, does one require the instruction, "love thy neighbour" or "love thine enemies"? The individual self has now passed the limitation of selfishness and has seen a region where the self and the not-self are not alien to each other but are both grounded in the same Reality. An injury to the not-self is not a gain to the self, because the not-self also is a part of the same reality which is manifested in and through the self. If the personal religion is worth the name, the virtues of love and charity are bound to be normal

possessions in its followers. Christianity, Islam and Vaishnavism have laid special stress on these virtues and none can claim any superiority over the others in this respect. The point that I am wanting to emphasise here is that what remains a far-off ideal in the so-called impersonal religions assumes a definite form and shape, and becomes a concrete living reality that can be seen and felt and with whom it is possible to hold communion. The conflict between the absoluteness of God and moral responsibility and freedom of the individual which is the main obstacle to the Buddhist's acceptance of God does not present any difficulty to the followers of Personal Religion. The highest freedom of man consists in the resignation of his will to the will of God. Real knowledge consists in perceiving that everything is the work of God and that there is nothing apart from God. A free offering, a free resignation of one's will to the Lord, a joyful acceptance of what is willed and ordained by God, is all that is possible for the finite being and this constitutes his highest attainment. Absolute self-surrender is the culmination of human freedom and but for this final step freedom loses all worth and significance. The development and discipline of the human will can have only this as its final aim, *viz.*, its coincidence with the Divine will, coincidence with the perfect freedom, coincidence with the Absolute. When the Bhagavadgita reveals the topmost secret, the highest knowledge, it says, "Take refuge in me alone, forsake everything that comes to you as dharma or adharma, I will redeem you from all sin, grieve not". The workings of the individual will have to be all converged on the Absolute will. This is *śaraṇāgati*, this is self-surrender. Man is in a position to take this step when he has reached the highest point in the ladder, when he has realised through his free actions that all freedom lies with the Absolute and that the goal of human freedom is to realise absolute freedom and to find human freedom to be not alien or opposed to it but to be included and coincident with it. This step is a necessary corollary to the realisation of absolute freedom, the realisation of the freedom of God, and not only no problem remains about the irreconcilability of human freedom and Divine freedom but a perfect reconciliation between the two is

experienced at this stage. Human freedom is found to be identical with God's freedom and the universal spirit is recognised to be the self of all. So long as the real spirit is not discovered, there seems to be an opposition between human freedom and Divine freedom. The passions and impulses, the instincts and desires, are found to be opposed to what God wills. But when the Pure self is discovered, it is found to be identical with the will of the Absolute and the opposition that was experienced before disappears altogether.

Those who are under the impression that Hinduism is either a crude polytheism or an abstract monism and pantheism will be disillusionised if they care to study even a portion of the vast literature of Vaishnavism. Not even the worst enemy of Vaishnavism can say that it is not unambiguous theism and Dr. Otto rightly thinks it to be the "keenest competitor" of Christianity. It must be said to the credit of Dr. Otto that unlike many other Western scholars, he has unhesitatingly declared that the theism that is found in the schools of Vaishnavism having their source in the Bhagavadgita is undoubtedly older than Christianity and that there is not the slightest reason for supposing that the theism presented in Vaishnavism is borrowed from Christianity. Hinduism shows varied phases of polytheism and monotheism, of pantheism and theism, of impersonal, personal and supra-personal religions, and a careful study of Hinduism in all its aspects gives one the benefit that may be derived from the study of comparative religion. It is almost impossible to present any aspect of religion which has not its analogue in Hinduism and a proper understanding of its essence must, therefore, be supposed to be a really difficult task. Islam or Christianity is a purely personal religion and may be supposed to be confined to this aspect alone. The occasional utterances in the Johannean Gospel or in some of the Suras, though showing a transition to the supra-personal stage of religion as we shall see hereafter, are not to be taken as the central part of the religion. The personal aspect may be taken to be the essence of Christianity as well as of Islam, and the occasional passages may be interpreted as only suggesting the supra-personal stage of

realisation and as confirming the fundamental conclusion of comparative religion that there is affinity amongst all higher religions. But in Hinduism the personal religion of the Bhakti Schools is no mere isolated occurrence, no detached phenomenon having neither any antecedent preparation nor any subsequent development, but represents a definite stage in the course of religious discipline. The concrete Personal God residing equally in all creatures is the embodiment of the moral Ideal and is the Absolute spirit that speaks to the finite spirit. Yudhisṭhira, the righteous king in the Mahabharata, feels the presence of God and follows without hesitation the way shown by Him. God, to him, is no mere abstract ideal which may or may not be real, but is a living Presence which is also the most real. He asks his queen, Draupadī, not to entertain any doubt in the matter and to cast aside all questionings. He feels no necessity for taking the counsel of his brothers Bhīma and Arjuna in any matter concerning righteousness or duty, because he perceives the truth clearly and there is no room for any doubt or denial. The lesson to be derived from this is that when moral preparation becomes complete as is the case with Yudhisṭhira, the Ideal gets a concrete embodiment and becomes as vivid as the most living real. The surest way to know the spirit in its entirety and fulness (asamśayam samagram mām yathā jnasyasi) is to be devoted to the Personal God and to practise spiritual discipline under His guidance and protection.[1] He is the best Yogin who becomes attached to the Personal God and has in his heart of hearts nothing else but the Lord.[2] These utterances in the Bhagavadgita clearly indicate that the Personal God of the Bhakti Schools appears on the scene at a certain definite stage of development in the life of the spiritual seeker. We shall see hereafter that this also in its turn gives place to the Supra-Personal Reality when its mission or function has been fulfilled. This stage of realisation is described in the Upaniśhads where the Personal God does not occupy any prominent position.

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, VII, 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, VI, 47.

Dr. Otto finds in India's religion of Grace all the characteristics that are found in Christianity and regards the similarity to be striking. There is the same ' singleness of aim ' and God or Nārāyaṇa is regarded as ' the absolutely trustworthy Being '. Luther's statement, " To have a God means that I trust him with my whole heart" will be corroborated by every Vaiṣṇava. That " God will save me and I shall be protected by Him in all the walks of my life" is the firm belief of the devout Vaiṣṇava and the latter elects Him to be his sole protector; *rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsah goptṛtve varaṇam tathā*. Salvation comes as a matter of grace and is entirely uncaused. No action, no human means is competent to secure liberation. It is God who Himself chooses and elects His devotees and awards salvation. It is through divine grace alone that a person puts off the natural man in him and regains his true self. With great difficulty Dr. Otto is able to point out a difference between the Christian conception and the Vaiṣṇava view. It is not a difference in details, not a difference in subject-matter, but only a difference in outlook. Dr. Otto rightly recognises that when the *bhakta* or the devotee finds his God, his relation to the world changes. He cannot but be moved by the suffering of his fellowmen and what St. John says, *viz.*, " If a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar ",[1] or " For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ", represents the true feeling of the genuine *bhakta*. But Dr. Otto thinks that although there is mention of sin and redemption in India's religion of grace, still the terms have not the same meaning and significance which they have in Christianity. It is true, he says, God promises redemption to his devotees in the famous couplet in the eighteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgītā " I will *redeem* thee of all thy sins ", but he supposes that the Sanskrit words are wrongly translated by the English terms. In the Indian religion, redemption is only release from individual acts of sin and does not mean a thorough conversion, a regaining of the

[1] IV, 20.

spiritual holiness, and an 'absolution', a 'removal of the guilt of sin'. There is, again, he thinks, no conception of original sin or guilt in the Indian religion. Dr. Otto supposes that although there is the conception of 'forgiveness' in the Bhakti Schools, this forgiveness is mere indulgence, overlooking of the faults and shutting eyes to them and is very different from the 'more profound' Christian conception of forgiveness which has an even almost mysterious sound. While it is true that a term has a somewhat different meaning due to its association and context and that the Christian conception, however similar it may be to be Indian conception, cannot be wholly identical with it, it is interesting to notice the anxiety of the partisan theologian to draw conclusions in his favour without adequate data. What would he say to the texts which definitely imply a thorough conversion? *api cet sudurācāra bhajate mām ananyabhāk sādhureva sa mantavyaḥ samyagvyavasito hi saḥ.* "Even if the most depraved becomes devoted to me without thinking of anything else, he is to be regarded as a saint because he has entered the right path." Dr. Otto has, however, rightly noticed in the Vaiṣṇava conception of *moksha* traces of the influence of the *ātmavāda* of Indian Philosophy and correctly perceived a difference between the Christian conception of salvation and the Vaiṣṇava conception. But he has failed to perceive that because the Bhakti religions in India have never forgotten the original and profound conceptions of India, their conception of salvation has been something really grand and sublime. It is painful to note that a profound theologian of the rank of Dr. Otto should say that although India has its golden rule of right intercourse with fellowmen, "One ought not to do to another what would be disagreeable to himself"—*na tat parasya saṁdadhyāt pratikūlam yad ātmanaḥ*, it is significant that the positive form of the golden rule as Christ has formulated is not found in India. The conceptions of *sarvabhūtahite rataḥ* or one engaged wholly in doing good to others and of one who does good to another without expecting any return from him and of regarding others' pleasures and pains as one's own[1] are so frequent in

[1] Gītā VI, 32.

Indian literature that it is difficult to believe that an orientalist like Dr. Otto should sincerely find the want of this to be a significant defect of the Indian religion. The Bhakti religion in India is only one of the phases of Hinduism and is to be understood in its proper context. It cannot be like Christianity or Islam an isolated conception limited to a particular point of view and perhaps this explains all the difference that Dr. Otto notices between it and Christianity.

It is characteristic of the personal religions that they all recognise that there is only one God. There is none like Him or superior to Him. The Nārāyaṇa Upanishad says "Nārāyaṇa is the eternal, spotless, inexpressible, changeless, true, pure, only God. There is no second beside Him." "There is none equal to Him," says the Svetāsvatara Upanishad. In the Bhagavadgītā we find, "I am the creator and destroyer of the entire universe." "There is nothing superior to me, Oh Arjuna, everything is contained in me just as the gems are held together by the thread." "I am the father, mother, and Providence and the grandfather of this universe." "I am the goal, the sustainer and the lord, the witness and the residence of all creatures; I am their saviour and friend; I am the creator and the destroyer, I am the endless course of the universe and also its sustenance." "Those who worship other gods also worship me." "The whole world exists only as a portion of myself and I hold the entire universe within me." "He is known as the Puruṣottama and the Paramātman who enters the three worlds and maintains them as their Lord." In the Quran also we find, *la ilāhā ill Allah*—there is no God except Allah. It is the most fundamental conception in Islam and when a man believes this and regards Mohammad to be the prophet of God, he is admitted to its fold. The unity of God implies, according to the Holy Quran, that God is one in His person (dhāt), one in His attributes (sifāt) and one in His works (af'āl). God's oneness in Person implies that there is neither plurality of gods nor plurality of persons in the Godhead. His oneness in attributes means that no other being can possess any of the Divine attributes perfectly. The oneness of his works means that it is not possible for anybody to do what God does. As in the Bhagavadgītā so in the Quran

it is stated " Allah is one, Allah is He on whom all depend; He begets not nor is He begotten and none is like Him." Allah has no *sharik* (partner) and he who worships anything besides Allah whether in the form of stones and trees or in the form of human beings supposed to be incarnations of God or thinks of three persons in the Godhead is guilty of *shirk* which is regarded as the gravest of all sins. In this respect Islam thinks that it goes beyond Christianity and the other personal religions. Although the Christian conception of Trinity is not a concepiton of three different persons in Godhead but there is always the conception of unity underlying the trinity, still Islam thinks that it is not a conception of pure unity. Islam is also bewildered by the Hindu conception of many gods and is slow to understand the Hindu idea of *ekamevādvitīyam*, which means that it is one, verily one and one without a second. It is difficult to understand how Islam's claim to superiority in this respect can be justified because the true Christian or the devout Vaiṣṇava cannot bear the idea of anyone by the side of his God, who is supreme and One. " God is one and one only—there is no one equal to Him "—is the fundamental proposition of the theist. Islam only proclaims this fundamental principle emphatically when it holds that its conception of unity is the purest and the best. There is only one God and His command is to be followed at all costs and in every sphere of life. None can command obedience except Allah and he who follows his own lower desires is also guilty of *shirk*. The constant thought of omnipresence and omnipotence of God combined with the conception that true obedience is due to God alone leads the follower of the personal religion to the highest point and prepares him for absolute self-surrender when he can say in joy " Thy will be done ". It is a really beautiful conception in Islam that he who follows his own lower desires is obeying somebody else than God and is following something in preference to the Divine commandments and is really guilty of a form of *shirk*. The dignity of the Godhead is maintained strictly in the Islamic conception of its unity and none is allowed the status of God. It very often saves religion from degenerating conceptions and Islam will be doing a great service to the cause of religion if, instead of attempting to

show its superiority to others, it emphasises this aspect of its doctrine for its real worth.

The Psalms in the Old Testament are the most striking illustrations of what personal religion means and their place in religious literature can hardly be over-estimated. It is impossible not to notice their beauty and sublimity, and as they come from the heart, they cannot but touch the heart of the reader. The Psalms speak of the sovereignty and glory of God, of His omniscience and omnipresence. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."[1] "The Lord of hosts, he is the king of Glory."[2] "Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."[3] "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."[4] "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"[5] "God is the saviour, the protector and the sole deliverer. There is constant thought of Him and Him alone." "My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; My shield and he in whom I trust who subdueth my people under me."[6] "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: Yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."[7] God is the only refuge in weal or woe and there is complete surrender into the hands of God. "For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me."[8] "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."[9] The attitude of the devotee can be best understood from the words of Job when he said unto his wife, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What?

[1] XXIV, 1, 2
[2] XXIV, 10.
[3] CXXXIX, 2.
[4] *Ibid.*, 8.
[5] *Ibid.*, 7.
[6] CXLIV, 2.
[7] *Ibid.*, 15.
[8] XXXI, 3.
[9] XXVII, 10.

Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" God is the Lord who always looks to the welfare of His children and his devotees and whatever comes from Him must be good for His creatures. The devotee only thinks of the Lord and has no time to think of anything else. In the Bhagavad Gita, we find the term *nityayukta* which means one who is constantly and without remission attached to the Lord, and also the terms *ananyā bhakti* and *avyabhicāriṇī bhakti*. The bhakti or devotion that knows no other is *ananyā bhakti*. The bhakti that has no *vyabhicāra* or transgression, that is, that is never guilty of faithlessness in the form of any thought of any other but the One Lord is all that is meant by *avyabhicāriṇī bhakti*. Although the Lord is very kind and compassionate, he is a very jealous and fastidious lover: he cannot bear the thought of any one by his side and does not accept any one as his beloved who does not offer himself or herself entirely to Him. If there is even the slightest thought of anything else, if there is even a little attachment to anything else, if there is even a little attachment to anything finite, if the seeker of Truth recognises any other master but the Lord and wants to obey his impulses or desires to the neglect of the unconditional command of the Pure Spirit; if the outer garments and coverings and not the naked spirit do still allure him in any way, the Infinite Lord eludes him. If the worshipper seeks anything other than the Infinite, he worships the *kṣudradevatā*, the limited god who is the presiding deity of some finite object, of material gain or prosperity, and not the *sarvalokamaheśvara*, the Almighty Lord of the entire universe. He who, on the other hand, gives his whole heart to the Absolute and thinks of nothing else and recognises the worth and dignity of the spirit as such and realises fully the futility and worthlessness of what is not spirit, is taken up by the Lord, and the Lord Himself directly attends to his material needs.[1]

Here it is a personal relation between God and His devotee and there is no room for any doubt. "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all fears,"

[1] Bhagavadgītā, IX, 22.

says the Book of Pslams.[1] Here is the clear expression of a personal experience. The Bhakti Schools in India give us innumerable records of personal experiences in which there is no haziness, no theorising, no abstract reasoning, but which show a vividness and a liveliness, a 'warmth' and an 'intimacy' that cannot but be felt by the reader even after hundreds of years. Religion implies a definite contact with ultimate reality and unless unmistakable evidence of this contact is there, it is risky to designate an experience as religious. Contact with ultimate Reality must express itself in the form of fuller life and vitality, universal love and charity, inexhaustible and deeprooted faith and hope and unshakable belief in salvation and immortality. The words of St. John—" If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar "—have hardly any parallel and express the deepest and the barest truth. If, after contact with the Infinite, the finite is still in despair, if the soul is not convinced of its immortality and salvation, if death does not become a laughable absurdity, if immortality is not tasted then and there with the experience of the Infinite, if finitude and death are not *perceived* to be unreal, if there is not abundant life, abundant hope and abundant bliss flowing from the inexhaustible source of all energy and all freedom, it is very much to be doubted whether the experience is genuine. Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly says, " A man may be highly moral, practise virtue unscrupulously, but if faith and hope in the spiritual direction of the universe are not there, he is not a religious man." [2] Although morality and religion are closely bound up with each other and the aim of morality is to ' remake human life into the mould of the unseen ' the vision of which is the aim of religion, the distinction between the two should never be lost sight of. Religion is something more than morality. It is communion with a concrete reality and is something more than reverence for the moral ideal. The abstract ideal must assume or rather transform itself into a concrete embodiment and be a Person. The ideal must be more clear and definite, must cease to be something remote and distant and come very near to one's heart, must attain a concrete shape and be at least

[1] XXXIV, 4.

[2] *Religion in Transition*, p. 21.

as real as a living Person before one's presence and must gain an immensity and an expansion transcending the limits of subjectivity.

Miracles occupy a prominent place in personal religions. Jesus Christ, Muhammad, Sri Krishna and Sri Gauranga—all performed miracles. Jesus turned water into wine, healed dying men, cured lepers, gave eyesight to the born-blind, distributed five small pieces of bread amongst five thousand men who were all satisfied with the food, and gave life to dead men. Sura 17. 1 says, "Glory be to him who carried his servant by night from the sacred mosque to the distant mosque whose precinct we have blessed, that he might show him of our signs—verily he it is who hears and sees." This Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem has been discussed at great length by John Clark Archer in his book, 'Mystical Elements in Muhammad,'[1] and although he does not think it to be so much a miracle as a mystical experience, this is generally regarded as a sign definitely indicating the prophethood of Muhammad. References are also made to the splitting of the moon (liv. 1-2) and the help at the battle of Badr (iii, 120). Hughes gives a list of the miracles which the Traditionalists ascribe to Muhammad which are on a par with those performed by other prophets. The orthodox interpreters do not lay much emphasis on miracles of this sort and point out that according to Islam the Quran itself is the greatest miracle. The word employed in the Quran is *āyat* which means 'a sign or mark by which a thing is known'. If miracle is a sign or proof or evidence of Divinity, the Quran which is Divine revelation is the greatest miracle. "If men and jinn should combine together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others (17 : 88) "Or do they say, He has forged it? Say. Then bring a chapter like this and invite whom you can besides Allah if you are truthful" (10. 38). The Quran gives the first place to prophetic utterences amongst miracles. It must mean miraculous power when the prophecies attributed to the prophets are fulfilled either in their lifetime or after their death. Whatever may be the nature of the miracles that Islam

[1] Pp. 45 ff.

accepts, it cannot be denied that miracles are regarded as signs and indications of superhuman power. Vaiṣṇavism speaks of innumerable miracles performed by the incarnations (avatāras) of God and lays great stress on the efficacy of the constant thought of the Divine Birth and Divine deeds of the Lord in the human form. The constant thought and remembrance of the deeds of the incarnation of God help concentration on the divine attributes and purify the mind. The description of the birth of Sri Krishna and his innumerable and incomparable uncommon deeds as is found in the Bhāgavat Purāṇa is regarded as a rich treasure and is highly prized by the Vaiṣṇavas. Sri Gauranga, who is regarded as an incarnation of God by the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas, also performs miracles. Not only many a sinner is turned into saints, many an unbeliever becomes devout Vaiṣṇavas, but bodily deformities and deadly diseases are healed by mere touch or even by mere will.

It has become a fashion in the modern age to condemn miracles and to regard them as wholly unconnected with anything really spiritual. But it is to be seriously considered whether in this age of unbelief, the use and value of miracles should, instead of being thrown away, be sought to be established with a fresh vigour. Contact with the source of all power and energy must result in the flowing of the Absolute Energy to the experiencer of the Absolute. If this does not happen, it is a pseudo-experience or a sham experience. The Upanishads declare, *brahmaveda brahmaiva bhavati*, one who knows Brahman verily becomes Brahman itself. The Vedanta holds that one cannot become Brahman unless one becomes first Īśvara, that is, acquires omnipotence like God Himself. The transition from the individual (jīva) to the Absolute (Brahman) must pass through God (Īśvara),—this is the position definitely established in the Siddhāntaleśa by Appyadīkshita. If one becomes Brahman itself, one must become Īśvara also, because Brahman is not less than Īśvara in any case. The seeker of Truth may not desire or will the powers and may regard these worldly powers to be of no important worth, but whether he desires them or not, they must be there. The Absolute cannot be *experienced* without being raised to the level of the Absolute, and a

realisation of the Absolute necessarily implies possession of the characteristics of the Absolute on the part of the realiser. One has first to become divine and acquire godly qualities if one is to be competent for the worship of God. This is the meaning of the text, *devo bhūtvā devam yajet*. If the will of the devotee becomes identical with the will of God, if the highest attainment consists in perfect coincidence between the Divine and the human will, if the devotee or the prophet or the Incarnation or the Son of God acts in perfect consonance with and obedience to the will of the Lord and not in haughty arrogance which is absurdly impossible at his stage of attainment and realisation, miracles or superhuman performances and happenings are perfectly reasonable and intelligible. The conception of God as perfect freedom loses all meaning if this possibility is denied. Attempts have been made to underrate miracles or to throw them away from the time from which genuine contact with ultimate reality has been rare. God Himself appears or incarnates Himself when there is necessity for it, when righteousness is at a low ebb and when sin predominates and when the Eternal Law, the *rta* or the *dharma* can no longer hold itself. Sri Krishna felt the necessity of showing His *Viśwarūpa*, His immanent presence in all things of the world, to Arjuna, his devotee and disciple, in order to eradicate the doubt that arose in the mind of the latter and thus to establish his firm faith in the divine order of things. Sri Gauranga had at times to show His divine form to his followers for the same purpose. We may call these miracles if we like or regard them as the working of God's purpose through His agents or even the appearance or incarnation of God in a miniature form.

The Yogasūtras of Patañjali are invaluable companions to all seekers of spiritual progress and in India they have been accepted and adopted by all sects, irrespective of their philosophical creeds and leanings. The great sage, Vyāsa, who is the original author in every other case, has written a commentary on the Pātañjala Sūtras and it is regarded as one of the best, if not the best, treatises in the whole domain of Sanskrit literature. Patañjali has devoted an entire chapter (out of the four chapters of the book) to the discussion of *bibhūtis* or spiritual powers. The value of

these *bibhūtis* or powers has also been assessed by Patañjali as well as his commentator. These powers do demonstrate to the person who practises yoga the truth of the principles enunciated and help him to move on to the forward path in his long and difficult and arduous journey. But for these practical tests of the truth of the theories and the verification of his achievements, it would have been difficult, if not altogether impossible, for him to stick to the difficult course of discipline. Miracles are not *necessarily* fraudulent devices, false stories invented by disciples, but may very well be manifestations of the Divine Power acting freely whenever and wherever the need arises. It is difficult to imagine that the apostles and prophets, saints and sages, holy and righteous people, all the scriptures,—the Bible and the Quran, the Gītā and the Bhāgavata Puraṇa—all should form an unholy alliance to tell lies.

Dr. Leuba thinks that men of wealth and influence " want to preserve at all costs for the masses, a religion preaching humility, obedience to established authority, and renouncement of earthly possessions in exchange for the imperishable treasures of heaven."[1] As a psychologist who thinks that he has been able to analyse the contents of the religious consciousness, he believes that there is no truth in religion and that it is a device by ingenuous persons to deceive their less fortunate brethren and to lull to sleep their ' occasional painful yearnings '. Dr. Leuba's opinion is not very much different from that of Karl Marx, *viz.*, religion is the opium of poor people. It is indeed to be regretted that Dr. Leuba does not find in the religious experience true revelation of the spirit, the dawning of a spiritual consciousness which is something more than the intellectual and the moral consciousness, a true conversion and a thorough re-orientation of the values of life. Does not the spiritual experience reveal light and life, bliss and *ānandam*, serenity and sublimity, tranquillity and repose, harmony and equilibrium, peace and silence, a higher extension and expansion, a culmination and consummation?

1 *Religion in Transition*, p. 197.

Is religion only the promise of a future reward and nothing for the present? Is it not an immediate attainment, a present fulfilment, a direct contact with the Infinite Source of Energy and Bliss? The rich experience of the mystics all over the world in all ages cannot be covered by the psychologist's explanation. Genuine spiritual experience refuses to be explained away as priest-craft or as the ingenuity of rich people or as a device to support the tyranny and oppression of the wealthier classes over their less fortunate brethren.

Dr. Leuba would very much like to believe in the existence of a 'Good Shepherd, a perfect, all-powerful Friend' and be comforted and encouraged by the thought, but he regrets that "One is not free to believe what one would like to believe" and finds no satisfaction in disregarding or ignoring the truth. Traditional religion, he thinks, has done enormous harm to society and should not be allowed to continue to do it. High regard for truth alone prevents him from accepting the validity of religion. But has he cared to discuss the criterion of truth? The clearness and distinctness of an experience and the conviction of the experiencer are no criteria of truth, because "*a mistaken* absolute certainty is not a rare occurrence." Dr. Leuba here forgets that there is a stage of experience where the distinction between the subject and the object disappears and the question of a criterion becomes meaningless. It will be discussed elaborately where we deal with the ontological argument and discuss the merits of the *swayaṁprakāśavāda*, the theory that self-revelation is the only criterion of truth. The pragmatic test, *viz.*, the moral uplift and the enjoyment of bliss, and the service to humanity, and the universality of the experience, *i.e.*, the sameness of the experience of the mystics in all climes and in all ages, and the coherence or consistency between what the mystic claims, *viz.*, his contact with universal Love, and his conduct, *viz.*, his wide sympathy and love for his fellow-men have apparently no value for Dr. Leuba. But these are all the possible tests of truth. If none of these singly or even their combination and cumulative strength do satisfy Dr. Leuba, he must be wanting something impossible or he does not know his own

mind. He is ready to turn over the physical universe to the engineer, disease to the physician and intellectual education to the lay teacher, and the dismissal of God from these fields is not to be accounted a loss. God is not necessary because the physician can heal diseases; if God is not necessary, He does not exist. An excellent argument showing high regard for truth! I can earn my living without my father's help. My father is not necessary for me; therefore, he does not exist. If anybody says—But I see him and experience him before me. Dr. Leuba will certainly say, "That is of no account. Have I not told you we sometimes see illusions and moreover, have I not shown you that he is unnecessary?" Religion asks people to love men and all creatures and to regard all as equal being children of God. If the rich and the well-placed in life wanted that their poor and unfortunate brethren should ever continue to be in that state, would they have invented religion which is the grand leveller of all things? In the eyes of God, not only all are equal, but benevolence and charity are virtues which are essential for all seekers of God. Whether it be in Islam or in Christianity or in Hinduism or in Buddhism, we find that it is incumbent on all religious people to distribute a portion of their wealth in charity. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." [1] We have it in the First Epistle of St. John, "Those sinful men who cook for themselves only, verily eat sin," says the Bhagavadgītā.[2] *Zakat* or charity towards men is laid down in the Quran as the second great pillar on which Islam stands and its position is only next to prayer. Keeping up prayer which means constant remembrance of God and spending out of what has been given to man are the two practical requirements in Islam. "Those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend benevolently out of what we have given them; and who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee, and of the hereafter they are sure. These are on a right course from

[1] Ch. II, 9.
[2] III, 13.

their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful." [1] The Quran says plainly, " And they say, none will enter Paradise except he who is a Jew or the Christians. These are their vain desires. Say. Bring your proof if you are truthful. Yea, whoever submits himself entirely to the Allah, and he is the doer of good to others, his reward is with the Lord, and there is no fear of them nor shall they grieve."[2] Entire submission to God and the service to humanity are the two essential requirements in Islam as well as in the other religions. If religion demands benevolent spending on the part of those who possess wealth, would the wealthy invent it? Religion brings the sense of guilt and sin to the unscrupulous person amassing wealth at the cost of others and can only torment him with the pangs of conscience. Is it conceivable that he of all persons should invent the theory of religion? Rather, it is quite possible that those who are in dread of God for their past thoughts and deeds should be interested in formulating a psychology of religion and denying the truth of its contents.

When the New Testament says, " God is light and in him is no darkness at all " [3] and that " If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not speak the truth," [4] it is an unambiguous statement that religion is no theory but a clear and direct experience. If we walk in light, we walk in God; if we do not walk in light, it is an unmistakable proof of our not being in God. God is no hazy and shadowy existence which we may or may not have distinctly realised. If the Light that is God does not illumine us, if the Life that is God does not regenerate us, we may be sure that we have been deceived and we should remember the words of St. John, " Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." [5] The Bhagavadgītā also tells us the very same thing. " It is the Light of lights. It is said to be beyond darkness. It is of the nature of knowledge; it may be regarded as the

[1] 2 : 3-5.
[2] 2 : 111-12.
[3] First Epistle of John I, 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, I, 6.
[5] *Ibid.*, IV, 1.

knowable inasmuch as it is realised in knowledge. It is implanted in the hearts of all." [1] It is not a bare abstraction, it is not a theory, not a mere hypothesis. It is firmly rooted in the hearts of all. It is realised as the Great Revelation, the uncommon illumination that gives lustre even to the luminaries like the sun and dispels completely the darkness of Ignorance. It is the inside and the outside of all things and creatures. It is not known because of its extreme subtlety and fineness and not because it is non-existent. It is at once far and near. It is farthest removed from those who are ignorant and very near to those who know. These words definitely show that it is an experience in the deepest recesses of the soul and anybody who has been able to reach that depth has access to the ultimate Reality which religion proclaims. Those who deny the existence of this reality are the less fortunate persons who cannot penetrate behind the surface and think that there cannot be anything besides what is observed by them.

Islam also regards God as al-Nūr or the Light or rather as the Giver of Light (24 :35). God is Love and Mercy, and the names Rahman and Rahim occur in every chapter of the Quran. If God causes distress, it is because He wants reformation of the sinner. "We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves."[2] If God is Mālik and requites evil, it is not in a spirit of vengeance but in a spirit of forgiveness. The same ideas occur in the Quran and in the Bible. If we want forgiveness for our sins from God, we should be forgiving in our dealings with others.

Islam definitely rejects the anthropomorphic conception of God. "Nothing is like a likeness of Him." [3] When it is said that God has power, knowledge, love and other attributes, it is never meant that the words have in God their ordinary sense. God sees but it does not mean that He has eyes like our eyes; God hears, but it is not meant that

[1] XIII, 17.
[2] VI, 42 & VII, 94.
[3] 42, 11.

He has ears like our ears. When the Quran speaks of the 'hands' of God,[1] it simply means 'His unlimited power in bestowing His favours on whom He will.' God's throne does not signify any place but it represents His control of all things and symbolises His infinite power. It is interesting to notice that the Bhagavadgītā and the Upanishads describe the ultimate Reality in the very same way and even more explicitly *apāṇipādo javano gṛhītā paśyatyacakṣu sa sṛṇotyakarṇaḥ*.[2] "Although He has no feet He walks and although He has no hands He receives. He has no eyes but still He sees; He has no ears but still He hears." "It shines through the functions of all the senses and yet it is devoid of all sense-organs."[3] "The fools despise me embodied in the human form; they do not know my transcendental being as the Lord of all existence."[4] "Not knowing my supreme nature, immutable and transcendent, foolish men think that I, the unmanifest, am endowed with a manifest form."[5] It is to be noticed that in all personal religions God is described as the Almighty, the Infinite and the One Lord and it is repeatedly said that there is none like Him. The Upanishads declare, "As there is even nothing equal to Him, how can there be anything superior to Him?"—*na tat samohsti kutohbhyādhikaḥ*.

It is not understood how in the face of these clear statements of the Bhagavadgītā and the Upanishads, the charge of anthromorphism and even idolatry could be levelled against Hinduism. It may be that in their anxiety to prove the uniqueness and superiority of their own revelation, Islam and Christianity have failed to grasp the real significance of these statements or have overlooked them altogether. But it is also true that Hinduism presents such a variety of aspects that it is very likely to bewilder men of foreign culture and civilisation and unless there is the proper spirit of enquiry and it is approached with the

[1] 5 : 64.
[2] *Svetaśvatara Up.*, III, 19.
[3] *Bhagavadgītā*, XIII, 14.
[4] *Ibid.*, IX, 11.
[5] *Ibid.*, VII, 24.

reverential atitude befitting a student, it is very likely to withhold the key with which alone it may be possible to unlock its mysteries.

Great emphasis is laid on the practice of prayer both by Islam and Christianity. Islam assigns the first place among the religious duties to prayer. Prayer is God's by right (13 : 15) and God alone is the hearer of prayer. If a man pray to any other than God, it is of no avail; those to whom prayer is made do not hear and cannot answer the prayers even if they do hear. God not only hears the prayers but also answers them and bestows on whom he will the necessaries of life (30 : 36) and spiritual blessing. Prayer keeps a man away from evil and thus enables a man to attain to his perfection. Prayer helps a man to realise the Divine in him. It is not mere meditation but it is communion with God. The belief in the unseen is turned into a certainty through the realisation of God within by means of prayer. Prayer is an attempt to be in touch with God who possesses perfect attributes and it is the touch with the perfect that can enable a man to be perfect. The aim of prayer is " to be drawn away from the worldly trammels for a while and to drink deep at the source " and prayer has sometimes been described as *munājāt* or confidential intercourse with God (Bn. 8 : 39, 21 : 12). The saying of prayers has been compared to washing in a river. If a man has a river at his door in which he washes himself five times a day, it cannot possibly leave any dirt in him; similarly, a person who says his prayers five times a day washes off all his sins. It is also said in the Hadith that prayer is a *Kattārah*, a means of restraining the evil tendencies in man. The constant remembrance of God which is the aim of prayer is bound to be the greatest restraint upon sinful acts and sinful thoughts. Men recognise the divine aspect in them through prayer and the oftener they revert to prayer the more they become directly aware of the Divine presence and the farther removed they become from the path of sin and evil.

It is a beneficent practice to attempt to see God and talk with Him. In one Hadith it is stated that man should worship God as if he sees Him (Bn. 2 : 37). Many devout Christians have described to us their practice of conversing

with God.[1] God is a living Presence whom we have to see before us and within us. It is a presence which we have to feel and with whom we have to converse. The Bhagavadgītā also speaks of constant meditation, constant remembrance, constant recitation of the name of the Lord, constant obeisance to the Lord, constant vision of the Lord and entire surrender to the Lord. "With their thought fixed in Me, with their life absorbed in Me, enlightening one another about Me and always conversing about me, they derive satisfaction and delight."[2] "Constantly reciting my name and glorifying me, ever striving with firm vows and bowing before me, they with steadfast devotion worship me."[3] "He who sees me everywhere and sees everything in Me, to him I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me."[4] The Hindu and the Muslim have stated times of prayer; both of them have a prayer before sunrise and another at sunset. Both of them also have a prayer at midday, indicating that man is to remember the creator and the Lord of the universe not only when the atmosphere is calm and serene, not only before one starts the work of the day and after one finishes the work of the day, but also at the busiest hour one has to disengage himself from all worldly occupations for a short time and to try to realise the Divine presence within. The idea must be that man is to be in constant remembrance and in constant touch with God, and that to realise the Divine in him is the mission of his life. The Hindus lay great emphasis on the importance of the stated hours of prayer. At the meeting point or union between the day and the night, *viz.*, at dawn and in the evening, the whole atmosphere assumes a sublimity and serenity, and the entire surroundings are helpful in effecting a union between the individual and the universal, between the microcosm and the macrocosm. The midday also signifies a *sandhi* or a meeting point or a mid-point between morning and evening. In some schools midnight worship has also been prescribed. The *sandhikshaṇa* or the meeting

[1] Brother Lawrence.
[2] X, 9 (Swami Nikhilananda's Translation).
[3] IX, 14.
[4] VI, 38.

point has a special merit of its own for purposes of prayer and worship.

For the Christian, prayer may be supposed to constitute nine-tenths of his spiritual life. He knows nothing but the Lord, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come into thee."[1] "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me O Lord."[2] All his prayers are to God and he has absolute trust and confidence in Him. His life is centred in God and he can think of none else as his guide and saviour. If he is blessed with worldly possessions, it is the Gift of God; if he is afflicted with misery it is God's chastisement for his benefit. God's infinite forgiveness will redeem him from all his sins. The Son of God has sacrificed Himself for his salvation and for the redemption of his original sin. God can never forsake him; His eyes are always upon him. God knows all his thoughts and desires and nothing is hidden from Him. All his hopes centre round God and belief in the saving grace of God is his eternal hope. The Christian sings the glory not only of God but also of the name of God. St. John says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the *Word was God.*" The Tantra literature of the Hindus positively identifies God and the Word. "*Śabdabrahma parabrahma mamobhe śāsvatī tanū.*" "The Logos (the Word) and the Absolute both are my eternal bodies." The *nāma* and the *nāmī*, the name and the possessor of the name, are identical according to Vaiṣṇavism. It is believed that the Lord resides in His name and that recitation of the name of God is touching God and worshipping Him in one form. If one can drink deep at the source, if the recitation brings the reciter to the deepest recesses and to the primordial vibrations, if penetrating the gross and the surface vibrations, the subtle vibrations are reached and if there is further penetration into the unmanifested causal stage, and if even beyond that the fourth and the last stage is reached the identity between the word and spirit, between the vibration and consciousness, is realised.

[1] Psalms, 102, 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, 70, 1.

The repetition of the name of God is emphasised also in Islam and Christianity. Satan is 'straightway driven away by the mention of the Name of Christ.'[1] In addition to the use of the name of God, Muhammad speaks of the value of slow and distinct recitation of the Quran (73 : 4, 35 : 26). There is a feeling of exaltation, a sense of absolute purity, a feeling of being bathed and refreshed in every part of the body from the head to the feet, a sense of infinite bliss, a feeling of absolute harmony and peace, an experience that every letter of the name of God is constituted of ambrosia and nectar, a peculiar feeling of lightness in the body, a sense of clearness and transparency of the intellect, and experience of a light that dispels all darkness and of a joy that is unspeakable, when the recitation of the name of God attains its proper tune and rhythm. One has the feeling of being lifted up to a level of thought and experience which is very different from the ordinary level of disharmony and discord. One touches a new chord as it were which reveals a new world and bestows a new vision. This is very often described figuratively as being lifted to paradise or heaven. Sometimes actually the aspirant (sādhaka) feels that his body has become very light and is being lifted up from the floor. Professor Pratt describes the case of a person who says "A singular feeling or sensation comes to me when I pray, that while I pray I feel that my body is lifted up from the floor, and I feel light and floating, so to speak, in the air. Though my eyes are shut, I see objects far below."[2] St. Anthony on one occasion is believed to have a similar experience. When he stood up to pray at the ninth hour, he perceived that his mind was exalted and that while he was still upon the earth "his mind was transformed and he did not feel that he was upon the earth." The Hindu explains the phenomenon by saying that on these occasions when the mind is in the correct prayerful mood and when there is perfect harmony between the microcosm and the macrocosm, between the individual and the universal vibration, there is

[1] Budge, *Paradise of the Fathers*, p. 44.
[2] *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 421.

is identified with righteousness and the whole significance of the teaching of the Bible becomes evident as soon as attention is paid to these important passages. Confidence in God means unspeakable faith in righteousness and it is quite clear how the believers are saved. It cannot be that a man loves God (who stands for righteousness) and commits sin at the same time. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[1] By this second birth, Jesus means the birth of the spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."[2] There must be a new awakening, a new vision, an initiation into a new world, before one can understand the mysteries of Heaven. Christ speaks with authority. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know and testify that we have seen."[3] It is not possible to believe in heavenly things and ascend to Heaven unless one has come down from Heaven. There must be an initiation into the heavenly kingdom and a new birth. The Bhagavadgītā also says, "Those who are self-controlled become awakened to a new world which is steeped in the darkness of night for ordinary creatures."[4] A new awakening comes through self-control, through righteousness, through purification, and it is the pure in heart and the righteous who are born of God that have a vision of and are admitted to the Kingdom of God. The significance of the word 'Vāsudeva' is also very instructive. 'Vasudeva' means 'pure sattva' or the highest harmony, the perfect purity and the sublimest serenity, the sumtotal of all righteousness and noble virtues, and 'Vāsudeva' is born of 'Vasudeva'. Sri Krishna or Vāsudeva is the embodiment of all righteousness, the personification of all purity and nobility, the manifested image of all sublimity and serenity. As God or Vāsudeva rises out of Vasudeva, it is only when the mind is perfectly pure and righteous, when one seeks not the things of the world but the things of the spirit, when there has been a thorough conversion or a new birth, that there is any possibility of God being realised in

[1] St. John, III, 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, III, 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, III, 11.
[4] II, 69.

purified, there should not be any ripples or waves, so that the soul may be in a proper condition to receive the reflection of the spirit. Stillness and serenity undisturbed by any outside bodily influences, and transparency or clearness unsoiled by desires and passions, are the two indispensable requisites for guarding against the dangers that may either withhold or obscure the reflection. If *sattva* means proper adjustment and harmony, its value cannot be over-estimated in the matter of spiritual realisation and the Hindu scriptures have done an inestimable service to the cause of religion by placing extraordinary emphasis on it. The essential thing is to get hold of the point of equilibrium, the *sandhi,* and once the key is in possession, it becomes easy to unlock the doors of the source of Life, Light and Love. One walks in dark labyrinths and is disposed to regard all talks of spiritual treasures as mere myth and superstition, so long as one does not get any clue to reach the chamber in which all keys are hidden, so long as one does not experience the *sandhi* or the point of equilibrium; but as soon as the force latent in the point is realised, the conception of universal energy and life becomes verified beyond any possibility of doubt or denial. An infinite expansion is felt and unspeakable joy is experienced and wonderful illumination pervades the whole system, and the *sādhaka* exclaims, " I have to-day realised the truth laid down in the Scriptures ", and feels the difference between a mere intellectual belief and a living experience.

The entire Islamic method of prayer is intended to produce one single effect and that is nothing but the realisation of God's presence. The different reverential positions of the body which are prescribed for the saying of prayers have definite significance and these are not only meant for showing reverence to the Divine Presence but the different bodily postures help to awaken the spiritual sense. Prayers start with the utterance of the words Allahu Akbar which means God is the Greatest and after the utterance of the words at the opening of prayers, attention to everything but God is forbidden. The worshipper is first to place himself in the standing position and with folded hands he is to address his prayers to God, all the time feeling that he is standing

before the Holy and Majestic Presence. The bowing down, the placing of the forehead on the ground, the sitting posture and the prostration, the gradual ascending and the gradual descending, the placing of the body in all the different positions, all have great value as spiritual practices. The recitation of the holy texts and the silent contemplation of the Divine Presence correspond to the *japa* and the *arthabhāvanā* of the Hindus. The *Dhikr* which is translated as remembrance is the most essential element in prayer and in the Quran the whole of prayer has been called *dhikr* Allah or the remembrance of God. As in the Psalms, everywhere in the Quran God's glory has been praised, and His mercy and forgiveness have been besought, and Divine help and guidance have been invoked. "Glory to Thee, O Allah, and Thine is the praise and blessed is Thy name, and exalted is Thy majesty, and there is none to be served besides Thee" is the typical example of a *dhikr.* There is the prayer for the washing away of sins and refuge is taken in God alone. The *Ādhan* or the call to prayer from the tower of the mosque in a loud voice is not simply to be estimated at its face value. The resonance that the sound creates has a special significance and has its effect on the persons who follow it.

Every religion has its esoteric and exoteric elements. The esoteric elements in Islam we propose to discuss under Sufism, and some esoteric elements of Christianty are also found in some of the Gospels. especially in the Gospel of St. John. Islam in its exoteric aspect is a religion that promises not only salvation but worldly success. When the *Ādhan* calls worshippers to prayer, it says, 'come to prayer', 'come to success'. Success in worldly life is also attained through the worship of God, and the prayer to God is not only for spiritual welfare but also for material prosperity. We have the same thing in the Bible. The prayer to the Almighty Lord is not only for salvation but also for success in life and for the daily necessaries. The Hindus also speak of *abhyudaya* (success) and *niḥśreyas* (salvation), *bhukti* (enjoyment) and *mukti* (liberation) and so far as the exoteric element is concerned both are regarded as necessary. It is only at the esoteric level that there is complete absence of the thought of worldly enjoyment and

success, and the whole attention is concentrated on spiritual well-being and liberation.

Although prayer is enjoined in all personal religions and there is the combination of recitation and meditation in all of them, the real truth underlying the practice has been elaborately explained in the religion of the Tantras. The *Mantra* or the word is the manifestation of the *Nāda* or the *Śabda* which is the Cosmic Energy. This *Śabda* or *Nāda* as Cosmic Energy is the soul of the universe and as the breath of living beings constitutes their life, and in this aspect it is the *Prāṇa*. The Tantras hold that *cit* and *śabda*, illumination and vibration, represent two parallel aspects, the subtle and gross forms, of the same thing and attempt to reach illumination thorough vibration. Nāda or Śabda is the very first manifestation of *cit* and is most adjacent to it. The external things are also materialised forms of vibrations, it is true; but in them, the *cit* becomes more enveloped. In *nāda* which is the very first manifestation, the *cit* is not so solidified and it retains much of its fluidity, and it is because of this fact that it is easier to awaken the *cit* in and through vibration (Nāda) than through external things. *Nāda* is really intermediate between *cit* and *jaḍa* being neither so fine as the former nor so crude as the latter. The utility and efficacy of *Nāda sādhanā* cannot be over-rated and virtually it has been adopted by almost all religions. It is the invaluable discovery of the Tantras and their priceless gift to the world that vibration and illumination are two parallel manifestations of the same energy or *Śakti* and that as such one can lead to and awaken the other without fail. The vibrations can be easily got hold of in the form of breath and sound, *prāṇa* and *dhvani* and the *cit* can be realised through them, which otherwise cannot be got hold of directly because of its subtleness.

There are striking resemblances between Vaiṣṇavism and Christianity. God sends His only begotten son to the world for the redemption of mankind. The scriptures speak of the infinite love and compassion of the Father for His creatures. "Behold, what manner of love the father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."[1]

[1] St. John, III, 1.

"Every man that hath his hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."[1] The message of hope that Christ held out before his disciples, *viz.*, that "whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life"[2] and that God sent His son into the world "not to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him", reveals the aspect of Divine Mercy and Love clearly. God feels for the sinner and loves him so much that He also manages to save him. In all the hymns in *Vaiṣṇava literature* and in the Psalms, we find that God's justice is always tempered with mercy and God is appealed to as the All-merciful and as the forgiver of sins. If there is true repentance on the part of the sinner, God comes forward to save him forgiving all his sins. In Christianity, it is sometimes held that this repentance even is not necessary. Belief in Jesus Christ who died for the salvation of man, firm faith in the son of God, dispenses with the necessity for repentance, and confidence and hope in the Kingdom of God leave no room for the working of despair and repentance. "But God commandeth His love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[3] Christ, the God-man, sacrifices himself for the sinners and atones for their sin. Those who believe in the Great Sacrifice, those who understand the significance of this sacrifice on the part of the Son of God, thereby reap the fruits of repentance and atonement.

There are two very significant passages in the New Testament: "If we know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doth righteousness is born of him"[4] and also "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."[5] It is not very difficult to understand what is meant by the expression 'born of God', although it is not very common. To be born of righteousness is to be born of God, and whoever is born of God cannot commit sin. God

1 St. John, III, 2.
2 *Ibid.*, III, 13.
3 Romans, V, 8.
4 St. John, II, 29.
5 *Ibid.*, III, 9.

is identified with righteousness and the whole significance of the teaching of the Bible becomes evident as soon as attention is paid to these important passages. Confidence in God means unspeakable faith in righteousness and it is quite clear how the believers are saved. It cannot be that a man loves God (who stands for righteousness) and commits sin at the same time. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[1] By this second birth, Jesus means the birth of the spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."[2] There must be a new awakening, a new vision, an initiation into a new world, before one can understand the mysteries of Heaven. Christ speaks with authority. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know and testify that we have seen."[3] It is not possible to believe in heavenly things and ascend to Heaven unless one has come down from Heaven. There must be an initiation into the heavenly kingdom and a new birth. The Bhagavadgītā also says, "Those who are self-controlled become awakened to a new world which is steeped in the darkness of night for ordinary creatures."[4] A new awakening comes through self-control, through righteousness, through purification, and it is the pure in heart and the righteous who are born of God that have a vision of and are admitted to the Kingdom of God. The significance of the word 'Vāsudeva' is also very instructive. 'Vasudeva' means 'pure sattva' or the highest harmony, the perfect purity and the sublimest serenity, the sumtotal of all righteousness and noble virtues, and 'Vāsudeva' is born of 'Vasudeva'. Sri Krishna or Vāsudeva is the embodiment of all righteousness, the personification of all purity and nobility, the manifested image of all sublimity and serenity. As God or Vāsudeva rises out of Vasudeva, it is only when the mind is perfectly pure and righteous, when one seeks not the things of the world but the things of the spirit, when there has been a thorough conversion or a new birth, that there is any possibility of God being realised in

[1] St. John, III, 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, III, 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, III, 11.
[4] II, 69.

the heart. In Hinduism, the term 'dvija' has actually been used. It means the 'twice-born'. Really, the awakening to the sense of the spirit should be regarded as a new birth, an admittance to a new world where other categories are in vogue than those we are familiar with here. The kingdom of God is for the poor, not who are poor in riches but who are poor in spirit, who are lowly and meek, who have realised their insignificance before the mighty presence and the grandeur of the Lord. The Vaiṣṇava, like the Christian, beautifully describes the state of spiritual purity. One may be the wealthiest of men, but still if one has not got the one treasure, one is to be regarded as the poorest of the poor. If the devotion to God is wanting, it is dire desolation and extreme poverty. The devotee does not want riches in this world or even residence in Heaven but only wants to serve the Lord and to have His only companionship. The genuine devotee pines for the sight of God just as the true lover seeks nothing else but the companionship of the beloved. God is the person who can fulfil his desires and give him entire satisfaction and is the embodiment of all that he cherishes as his ideal and is the object of his longings and desires. The *Bhakta* and the *Bhagawan*, the devotee and the Lord, are inseparably bound to each other and none is complete without the other. If God is everything of the devotee, the devotee also is the instrument, the medium of the working and revelation of God. If the devotee seeks God as the idol of his heart, God also in His infinite love and mercy is in search of the poor, of the sinners who are seeking God for help. The Godhood of God cannot be revealed except through His believers and devotees. It is the spirit of God or the Holy Ghost that effectuates the new birth or the birth of the righteous and the spiritual life. Not only is Jesus born of the Holy Ghost but it is the Holy Ghost that generates the birth of Christ in every soul. The Holy Ghost represents the spirit of God and the importance that is ascribed to the Holy Ghost in the New Testament is significant. "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the spirit into the wilderness."[1] Wherever one has felt the

[1] *St. Luke*, IV, 1.

working of the spirit, whenever one has become filled with righteousness, whenever there has been a spiritual awakening in man, it has been ascribed to the agency of the Holy Ghost and it has been definitely stated in many places that the Holy Ghost is superior even to the son of God. "And whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." [1] We have a similar passage in St. Mathews also. "And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of Man, it shall be forgiven him but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." [2] The Holy Ghost works directly in the hearts of men and it may be regarded as Divine Mercy itself. The conception of Nityānanda, the associate of Sricaitanya who is regarded as the incarnation of God in the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism corresponds exactly to that of the Holy Ghost in Christianity. Nityānanda is regarded as the personification of Divine Mercy and his intervention and agency are almost always shown to be preliminary to the conversion or the new birth leading to redemption. He goes from house to house in search of poor sinners who are in dire need of redemption and is specially deputed for this purpose by the spirit of God, incarnated in Sricaitanya.

Bhakta and *Bhagawan*, the devotee and the Lord are correlates in Vaiṣṇavism. The devotee plays no mean part in the Divine sport (līlā). He is an active partner in the Divine play. It is not only the devotee who enjoys infinite bliss but the Lord also derives immense satisfaction. The Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal have so considerably elaborated and elucidated the relationship between the Lord and his devotee and have formulated so many aspects and varieties of the relationship, that it seems impossible to doubt the genuineness of their experience. They have described the relation, first, as between the servant and the master, next, as between friends and companions, next, as between the parent and the child, and lastly, as between the lover and the beloved, and

[1] *St. Luke*, XII, 10.
[2] XII, 32.

have delineated these different aspects with such exquisite excellence that it becomes evident that none but one who has actually experienced those feelings could have described them in so many details with such vivacity and vigour. The expressions used in the description reveal the liveliness of the experience and form the best internal evidence against the supposition of these being the creation of mere imagination. One or other of these four forms of relationship is actually selected and taken up as his mode of worship by each Vaiṣṇava belonging to the Bengal school according as it suits his temperament and constitution. It is not a mere dogma, not a mere routine formula, when the Christian mystic thinks that the relation between him and his God is that of the lover and the beloved or of the wife to the husband, or when the devout Vaiṣṇava thinks that he is the friend and the playmate of the Lord and meditates on the act of placing the Lord on his shoulders and of riding the shoulders of the Lord during playtime as part of the process of his worship. It must be a genuine experience, a definite realisation of an aspect of the Infinite, and cannot be explained away as mere fancy or imagination or priestcraft or church-dogma or the ingenuous invention of the rich and the wealthy to rob the poor and keep them sleeping with the opium of religion, as Karl Marx supposes.

Bengal Vaiṣṇavism has given to the world an elaborate and detailed description of the subtle features of the relationship between God and His devotee and has laid special emphasis on the relation between the lover and the beloved, or the *madhura bhāva.* There are exquisite delineations of the states of the mind of the devotee when he places himself in the position of the beloved, and the lover is away, and the devotee pines for his sight and companionship. The description of the state of *viraha*, when the devotee loses sight of God, that is, when the beloved misses the presence of the lover, given by the Vaiṣṇava poets, is one of the finest products in the literature of the world and its appeal to the heart is really incomparable. God is here not the Almighty who is to be obeyed for fear of punishment but the lover with whom the devotee has such intimate relationship that he has no hesitation in being angry

with him and rejecting Him when He comes to the devotee to seek his company. The states of *viraha* and *milana*, of the states of mind in the absence and presence of God, leave no doubt that the devotee is the counterpart of God and that there is a relation of correlativity between them. The devotee finds no satisfaction until he finds his God and the metaphor of the sweetheart is very apt inasmuch as it shows that the devotee is only the half and attains consummation and fulness in companionship with God. In devotion or *bhakti*, the duality or the relation between the subject and the object persists in some form at all stages. At the stage of transcendental knowledge or Jñāna, however, this duality is superseded and there is the feeling of oneness; God is not now an *object* that is seen or experienced by the devotee as the *subject*, but is the infinite consciousness and bliss that sublates the distinction between the subject and the object. The Absolute is not something which leaves the subject outside itself for its apprehension, but is the self-revealing reality that is all-pervading. It is the consciousness behind the empirical processes implying a division between the subject and the object, is the prius of the bifurcation which is really not a division but an assumption of the division. Jñāna or transcendental knowledge implies the rising to a state where there is the realisation of the empirical states being mere ripples or surface appearances of the profound calmness of the underlying ocean of consciousness. The rising to the transcendental consciousness does not mean an annihilation of empirical consciousness but a perception of the reconciliation between the transcendental and empirical not by way of compromise or a division of the territories but by way of realising that the one is merely imposed on the other and has no existence apart from it. It is nothing but a widening of the vision, a synthesising of all opposition and contradiction, a going beyond all limited categories, a realisation and perception that duality is not the ultimate state of things but imposed on unity and oneness.

Christianity and the theistic religions of India accept *Avatāravāda* or the doctrine that God incarnates Himself and comes to the world for the salvation of mankind. If Christ is the son of God, He is also God Himself. Jesus Christ says

definitely, "I and my Father are one," [1] "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," [2] "Believe thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" [3] If there are also passages which indicate that the Father and the Son are different, these are not to be taken at their face value. When Jesus says, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one that is God" [4] or "I come forth from the Father and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father," [5] he is not intending to emphasise his difference from his Father but only to glorify the spirit of God and to remind his disciples that their reverence for him should be based not on his individuality but on the spirit of God which he represents on earth. There is no difference as spirit between God who is in Heaven and the son of God who is in this world, and when Christ says that he and his father are one, he means that there is only one reality and that is the spirit of God. In the Hindu conception, the God who resides in *Baikuṇṭha* (Heaven) is the same person who incarnates himself in this world assuming a definite form, and there is absolutely no difference between the two. The birth either of the *avatāra* or of the son of God is from one standpoint an event in the history of the world, but from another standpoint, whenever and wherever the spirit of God enters the heart of a man and the latter is awakened to the righteous life, God is born again, and in the voluntary birth of God, the man is also born again to a new life. "Although the Goddess is eternal (nityā), still whenever she appears for accomplishing the work of the gods, she is said to be born anew," it is stated in the Mārkaṇḍeya Chaṇḍi. The work of the gods is only one, *viz.*, defeating and uprooting the demons (asurās) and to establish the cause of righteousness. In the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, we find, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." [6] The establishment of the kingdom of God in the

1 *St. John*, X, 30.
2 *Ibid.*, XIV, 9.
3 *Ibid.*, XIV, 10.
4 St. Matthews, XIX, 17.
5 St. John, XVI, 28.
6 VIII, 14.

hearts of men seems to be the aim of the birth of Christ in every soul and this is what is meant by *asuraparābhava* or defeating the end of Satan or the work of the demon. When God assumes a concrete shape and becomes embodied in the human form and appears before the world in order to lead men to the path of righteousness and to set an example so that they also may walk in the path trodden by Him, He is said to take an *avatāra*, or in the language of the Bible, to send His only begotten son to the world. The Bhagavadgītā says clearly that He takes his birth in the world for the establishment of righteousness (dharmasaṁsthāpana) when unrighteousness prevails in the universe and when persons through their own feeble efforts cannot persevere in the path of righteousness. At these critical periods, the appearance of an extraordinary soul becomes necessary who can kindle in the hearts of men the flame of righteousness by his own noble example. Jesus washes the feet of his disciples and says, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet", "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." [1] In his love for men, Christ sacrifices his own life and says, "This is my commandment: That Ye love one another, as I have loved you." [2] The Lord Krishna asks his devotees to meditate constantly on his divine birth and his divine deeds so that they also may acquire *sādharmya* or something of his divinity and attain salvation. The living example, the concrete embodiment of the ideal, the extraordinary acts, the unbounded grace and compassion, the superhuman love, the uncommon forgiveness and charity, the unswerving perseverance in the path of righteousness,—all serve to show the unmistakable working of the spirit of God and restore the lost confidence of men in the kingdom of God or in the victory of righteousness. This is the utility and the purpose of the objective manifestation, or what is said to be the incarnation of God. The *Avatāra* is necessary for serving as an ideal or a living example before the mass of humanity. But the Vāsudeva or Krishna that is born in the soul saturated with perfect purity (*viśuddha*

[1] St. John, XIII, 14-18.
[2] *Ibid.*, XV, 12.

sattva, which is the significance of the word ' Vasudeva '), the Christ or the son of God who visits those who are pure as well as poor, the *Devī* (Goddess) who kills the *asuras* or the evil tendencies and the impure and the unholy thoughts and desires, the unruly passions and impulses, is the God whose arrival is not public and marked by pompous ceremonies and heralded by angels but who appears in private in the dark recesses of the soul and makes His presence felt only to those who are watching day and night and expectantly awaiting His arrival every moment. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus says, " Watch, therefore, for Ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."[1] The Lord comes suddenly and often without notice and can be seen only by those who have kept their eyes fixed on Him winklessly lest the Lord may come and go away unnoticed seeing them unprepared. If the spirit of God animates the soul, there is a new birth and there is entrance into the kingdom of God and it is of no concern whether it is the spirit of God working directly or the spirit working through the objective manifestation. They are in Christ Jesus, " who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit "[2] and if the historical person is of any importance, it is only because he represents the spirit of God. In Christianity, as well as in Hindu theism, emphasis has been laid everywhere on following the demands of the spirit and rejecting those of the flesh. The kingdom of God means the victory of the spirit and the victory of righteousness. There must be the forsaking of the desires, the *tṛṣṇātyāga*, if there is to be real devotion to God, if there is to be genuine *Kṛṣṇaniṣṭhā*. If we are to fight the *asuras* (demons) successfully and completely, we have to invoke the aid of the Goddess who stands for the whole assemblage of gods and who is the embodiment of all the powers and excellences represented by all the gods without exception (niḥśeṣadevagaṇa-samūhamūrtyā). We have ourselves to acquire all moral excellence and we have to be equipped with complete righteousness if we are to be competent for the worship of the

[1] *St. Mathews*, XXV, 13.
[2] *Romans*, VIII, 1

Goddess who represents all excellence. In the language of the Bible, we have to put on the whole armour of God that we "may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" and the instruction is to have the 'loins girt about with truth' and to have the breast-plate of righteousness and to take 'the sword of the spirit which is the word of God'. If there is human effort and if the acquisition of virtues is there, and if it is combined with the working of the spirit of God there is nothing that can prevent success. Victory is assured where the bow of Arjuna, representing human effort, is combined with the guidance of the Lord as the charioteer.

Islam and Christianity as well as Vaiṣṇavism are pre-eminently religions of grace. Salvation is everywhere the gift of God and not something that is earned as a matter of right. In India it has been said: "The self can be acquired neither by ratiocination (pravacanena), nor by meditation (medhayā), nor by the hearing of many scriputual texts (vahunā śrutena), but is realised *by him alone who is selected* (or elected) by the Highest Reality",[1] and that he who is dearest is selected (*priyātmā eva varaṇīyo bhavati*).[2] Kasmir Śaivism lays special emphasis on Divine Grace which they designate as *śaktipāta* or the descending of the Divine Energy into the heart of the devotee. Liberation is exclusively a matter of grace and the time required for attaining salvation is determined by the intensity or force with which the Divine Energy penetrates into the heart of the devotee. *Parameśvarānugrahopāya eva svātmajñānalābhaḥ*. If there is *atitīvra saktipāta* or immensely intense penetration, there is an end of all obstacles at that very moment and the Jīva becomes instanteneously free.[3] All the Bhakti Schools agree in holding that God's mercy is the bestower of salvation. The Southern School, known as the *Prapatti* (surrender) School, is the most extreme exponent of Divine Grace. Passive surrender is the only means of attaining salvation; if one may at all speak of any means. God himself is the way and the means. Man is utterly

[1] *Kaṭh Up.*, II, 23; *Mundaka Up.*, III, ii, 3.

[2] *Sri Bhāṣya*, I, i.

[3] *Paramārthasāra*, Verse 96 and Yogaraja's *Commentary* on the above.

helpless and has not the capacity to earn salvation. He can only submit himself to the Lord absolutely and depend on His mercy. It is God who does everything for the redemption of the soul and God accepts freely. Grace is a priceless act and is absolutely free. In the Bhagavadgītā, it is said "Even those who are of sinful birth,—the females, the vaiśyas and the sūdras—attain the highest salvation being absolutely attached to me", and also "Only those who take absolute refuge in me alone cross my māyā (magical power)." The first couplet is the basis of the doctrine of the Southern School of *prapatti*. God never ignores the earnest prayer of those who submit themselves to the Lord and resign themselves absolutely to His will. The Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the Mahābhārata that the pitiful cry of Draupadī when she was being insulted mercilessly in the court of Duryodhana has not been forgotten by him and that his debt has increased heavily for his not being able to recompense the love and devotion of his devotee. God is never slow to accept His devotee who knows none else and nothing else but the Lord. In Islam it is said God is not deaf so that the prayers have to be recited in a loud voice in order to catch the attention of His ears. He is As-Sāmi and He hears even the faintest sounds. He is Al Mujīb, the Ever-Hearer of Prayers and He is the Seer (Al Baṣir), the watcher (Ar-Requib) and the witness (Ash-Shahīd). The prevailing characteristic of Allah is His absoluteness. He does what He pleases and is not bound by human rules and considerations. He is merciful to whomsoever He pleaseth. God misleads whom He wills and leads in the right path whomsoever He pleaseth. If it had pleased God, He would have guided all human beings in the right way. Inscrutable are the ways of God and human beings can only accept what has been willed and ordained by God. The term 'Islam' means resignation to the will of God and it is only logical that the keynote of Muhammad's religion should be the absoluteness of God and the resignation of human will to the Divine Will. Every thing has been created according to a measure and this is its *taqdir*, and it can only develop according to the measure assigned to it. *Taqdir* is popularly supposed to mean the absolute decree of good and evil by God and this meaning is

in perfect consonance with the absoluteness of God preached by Islam. Muhammad Ali, in his ' Religion of Islam ', says that this meaning is not known in the Quran and that the doctrine of predestination is of later growth. But it is not intelligible how he can explain away what is found in various places in the Quran [1] and what seems to be one of its fundamental teachings. Allah has eternally fixed the destinies of all things and nations and nothing can happen to anything but what has been ordained for it by Him. " No mischance chanceth either on earth or in your own persons, which, ere we brought it into being, was not in the Book: Verily easy is this to God—Lest ye distress yourselves if good things escape you, and be overjoyous for what falleth to your share." It is difficult to understand how if God has fixed the measures of all things, an interpretation which Muhammad Ali accepts, He may not be supposed to have fixed their destinies. Moreover, it is not understood why Muhammad Ali is so anxious to wipe out the doctrine of predestination from the Quran. There are in the scriptures of almost all higher religions texts indicating God's absoluteness on the one hand and human freedom on the other; Christianity holds that although God knew that Adam would fall yet He did not necessitate it. God's fore-knowledge is not denied, although human freedom and responsibility are retained. Hinduism having its firm faith in the law of Karma, holds, on the one hand, that each man is bound to reap the fruits of his own actions from which there is no escape, and on the other, that it is the will of God that reigns supreme and human beings are mere dolls in the hands of God. The Bhagavadgītā seems to divulge the whole secret of the matter when it declares that human beings, deluded by the sense of egoism, think that they are free agents, although it is the *guṇas* of Prakriti [2] that perform everything and are the real agents, and that it is God, residing in the hearts of all beings who by His Māyā causes them to revolve as though mounted on a machine.[3] Theology everywhere

[1] *Sura*. VII, 92; IX, 51; XXIII, 38-39.
[2] III, 27.
[3] XVIII, 61.

has been busy in reconciling God's absoluteness with human freedom, and if in the Quran there are passages indicating clearly the freedom of man which are pointed out by Muhammad Ali, there is not the least necessity for twisting the meaning of other texts or for ignoring some of the very well-known passages which exhibit clearly the absoluteness of God. Attempts at reconciliation have been made by the theologians and the general trend is to retain human freedom and responsibility but not to the extent of being at variance with the Divine Will. The Hindu thinkers have gone to the root of the matter and have shown that human freedom is illusory and that in the highest sense of the term 'freedom', God's Will and the will of man are identical. Human beings act freely in the full sense of the term when they act in unison with the Divine Will. God is the Higher Self of man and when man acts not in accordance with his passions and impulses, not according to the demands of the lower self, but in accordance with the dictates of His reason, when he is really actuated by the Higher Self, he may be said to have real self-determination or freedom. It is only now that he feels that he is not other-determined and has risen above the domination of the not-self, above the rule of what is not his own self, and he identifies his Higher Self with the ultimate reality of the universe. The Hindus have accepted God's absoluteness and human freedom both at their full value and have attempted a reconciliation that may solve the difficulty of other religions as well. In the Upaniṣads, it is stated that "he is made to perform good actions whom the Absolute wants to raise upwards and he whom the Absolute wants to send downwards is made to perform bad actions." This is an unambiguous statement of the absoluteness of the Divine Will and of the futiliy of human effort. On the other hand, it is stated everywhere that each man has to reap the fruits of his actions and there is no exception to the working of the law of Karma. We have exactly similar passages in the Quran and it is useless to attempt to prove that the Quran does not speak of the absolute decree of God. "God misleads whom He wills, and whom He wills He guides or puts in the right path."[1] "He whom God

[1] *Sura*, XIV, 4; see also VII, 39.

guideth is the guided and they whom He misleadeth are the lost "[1]; "Whoso willeth, taketh the way to his Lord; but will it ye shall not, unless God will it."[2] These texts seem to be exact parallels, almost translations, of the Upanṣadic passage which we have quoted above, and it is not possible to ignore this aspect of the problem by quoting other texts which show that human beings have been endowed with freedom. There is no denying that the Quran contains many verses supporting human freedom, and when Muhammad Ali refers to some of these verses and attempts to show that predestination is far from the teaching of the Quran, he is evading the problem and attempting to solve it by ignoring one side altogether. "Surely, we have shown him the way. he may accept or reject" (76 : 1) is certainly a verse that says that the human will is free and when suras such as XXI 48 and VII 7 say that the good and the evil done by each individual are carefully weighed against each other, certainly human responsibility is admitted. The Christians have their Judgment Day and the Hindus also have the Account Book of Chitragupta where the deeds performed by human beings are recorded and an account is kept of the merits and demerits of their actions. Islam says that God's agents who are ever-vigilant watch over the deeds and thoughts of men day and night and that all actions however insignificant are recorded. Every religion has its antinomies and it is only profound thinking and devout meditation and worship that can hope to solve them. God is conceived as Merciful as well as Just, as Al-Karīm as well as Al-Hakam; but how can Mercy go with Justice? God is omnipotent and absolute, how can human freedom be of any avail? These antinomies are intended to raise the seeker to a plane of consciousness where the opposition is reconciled; those who seek to solve the contradiction by ignoring or denying one member of the opposition do not enter into the significance of the problem at all. Salvation is a matter of Grace and is a 'causeless' happening; again, it must be supposed to be *earned* by the human souls, otherwise God becomes entirely whimsical and

[1] *Sura*, VII, 177.
[2] *Sura*, LXXVI, 29-30.

arbitrary. These are difficult problems that cause anxiety to the theologians and are not difficulties confronting any particular religion but are common to almost all religions.

We all feel that we have got free choice in our actions and that we are real agents and we accept full responsibility for our conduct. Repentance and the sense of guilt are genuine experiences. The moral sense and the consciousness of the 'ought' are clear indications of the freedom of our will and any theory preaching the falsity of freedom seems to be contrary to facts. But not only religion and theology, but also metaphysics and philosophy, speak of the Absolute Freedom which hardly leaves any room for the separate working of individual freedom. Spinoza, for example, conceives of his Absolute Substance as something from which everything follows of necessity, just as the properties of a triangle follow from the nature of a triangle, and in his conception of Sublime. Necessity, he finds no place for freedom. What then is the solution? The solution is given by Spinoza himself. We have to distinguish between *Imaginatio*, *Ratio* and *Intuitio*. In Imaginative knowledge, multiplicity is real, modes are real, human freedom is real. This is the phenomenal region, the sphere of empirical reality. But in *Intuitio*, i.e., in the level of intuitive knowledge, everything is seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, modes are not real, multiplicity is recognised to be not the truth, human freedom is not a fact. There is substance or God everywhere, there is nothing apart from God and everything is real in the reality of God. At this stage of experience where God is realised to be All-pervading and Infinite, the question of a separate reality possessing freedom becomes unmeaning and irrelevant. This is the solution of the antinomy. Man is free at the empirical level; at the transcendental level human freedom becomes identical with the freedom of the Absolute, and the declaration 'Thy will be done' and absolute self-surrender implying no self-abasement but consummation of the self become possible and assume their full significance. Man is really and fully free when he acts according to the dictates of his Higher Self and finds that the ultimate Reality is working through him in that way. Man's highest knowledge consists in recognising that what he regards as

his own action in the sphere of empirical reality is really the work of God seen under the guides of eternity. That everything is predestined and ruled by eternal necessity is simultaneously true with the fact in the empirical world that all actions are freely chosen. What from the transcendental level is Absolute Freedom or Absolute Necessity the two being the same at this level, there being no limitation or resistance anywhere, is from the empirical standpoint the free choice of human beings. There is no opposition between noumenal freedom and phenomenal mechanism or between an absolute necessity and a relative freedom. As the two belong to two different spheres, there cannot be any antagonism between the two. That is Spinoza's meaning, that is the teaching of the Vedanta, that is what underlies the antinomies put forward by religion. One is to rise to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the Spirit and transcend the religion of nature or the authority of the flesh, if one is to understand the reconciliation between human freedom and Divine Autonomy. It is not whimsicality, it is not arbitrariness, but it is the transcendence of the spirit over nature. As we shall have occasion to take it up again and discuss it fully, we do not elaborate it further at this stage.

While Islam and Christianity have repeatedly stated that salvation is entirely a gift of God, and Vaiṣṇavism, especially the Bhaktivādin of the Southern School, has held that it is a ' causeless ' event happening because of the grace of God, the Vedantins and the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas have sought to explain the philosophy of it. The Vedanta holds that liberation must not be supposed to be generated by any cause, because in that circumstance it would not be eternal (nitya) and might come to an end whenever there would be absence of the conditions generating it. Whatever is due to a cause is non-eternal and will have an end. *Yat kṛtakam tadanityam* is a general law that has no exception. If liberation is caused, it cannot be eternal, and if liberation has its end, bondage will result again and the whole purpose of attaining liberation will be baffled. Hence the Vedantins hold that liberation is not due to any condition, is not generated (utpādya), but is an eternal fact (nitya). Freedom is the birthright of the soul, and the soul is never in bondage;

only the freedom seems to be obscured because of some impurities; because of some hindrances, the freedom cannot get itself manifested. When the hindrances are removed and the impurities cleared up the freedom that is always there reveals itself in its full glory. There is nothing that causes liberation : there is only the removal of the obstructions hindering the manifestation of the eternal freedom. This contention of the Vedanta not only saves the doctrine of liberation from inconsistency but it also points out that the finite can never become the infinite. The attainment of the infinite, which is the goal of all religion, is not a passing from finitude to infinitude, which is not possible because that would obliterate the very meaning of the terms; it is rather the realisation and recognition of its infinitude by the seeming finite. The finite is inherently the infinite, the soul is eternally free and is never in bondage; in order to attain liberation the soul has only to realise that it is really so and has not to acquire anything new or attain something not previously attained. It is only rising to a state of knowledge and dispelling a state of ignorance, and not interfering with or introducing any change in the actual order of things. The finite is not to be made infinite by the real addition of something to it; it is only to be recognised as the infinite assuming the finite appearance. It is not a transformation of the existing order that is necessary; only an expansion of consciousness is needed for the realisation of the true order of things.

Bengal Vaiṣṇavism also holds that love for the Infinite which is the *summum bonum* is an eternal fact (nitya siddha) and is not a thing to be acquired (sādhya). It manifests itself in the heart that is pure through the hearing of scriptural texts describing the deeds and attributes of the Lord. This school of Vaiṣṇavism is also fully alive to the difficulties of the theory which holds that the *summum bonum* is to be acquired through meritorious deeds and not a thing accomplished from eternity. That which is acquired as the result of any process is bound to be non-eternal, and if salvation is such a non-eternal thing it loses its value altogether. It is because of this logical difficulty that salvation has been conceived to be a matter of Divine Grace

and not a thing to be earned by the devotee. Is God, then, a whimsical and arbitrary despot who besotws salvation according to His sweet will without taking into consideration the merits and demerits of persons? Islam, Christianity and Hinduism all believe in the efficacy of karmas or deeds done and hold that the award is made after judging carefully the merits and demerits of actions. Both the conceptions are there: God is just as well as merciful: God judges the good and bad actions minutely and also that God's Grace is the only thing that counts in the matter of salvation. There are innumerable texts in the scriptures of Islam, Christianity and Hinduism favouring both of these aspects. How to reconcile these opposing conceptions?

The real meaning of Grace seems to be something different from what it is ordinarily taken to be. It really seems to indicate that the Absolute as perfect freedom is above mechanism and is not dominated by the laws that work in the empirical sphere. We have an analogy in the solution of a problem. There is hard thinking, there is the arrangement of all relevant facts, there is careful reviewing of all the steps in the process of reasoning, there is severe straining in the brain, all that is humanly possible is being done, sleepless nights are passing, restless days are going, still the expected thing is not there. The solution sometimes seems to be almost reached, but still it is eluding. All on a sudden a flash comes and the whole thing becomes crystal clear, the long-coveted result is achieved. The light that comes is not continuous with the process leading up to it; it does not seem to be a resultant of the processes preceding its appearance in time. It seems to the inventor, to the artist or to the miniature creator, to the genius, to be a sudden flash, a new thing, a gift from above, a revelation that cannot be accounted for mathematically by the preceding steps. It is something that *transcends* all that has led up to it and is an *emergent* in the full sense of the term and not a *resultant* at all. This is perhaps what happens in the case of spiritual revelation also. The light that pervades the soul, and the bliss that obliterates all segmentation and floods the whole region of the heart, are perceived to be something new and different from what the devotee is familiar with and are felt to be not continuous

with the limited and fragmentary sparks or flashes preceding the sheet lightening. It cannot but be taken by the devotee as something *given*, as a free and merciful gift of God, as the descending or coming down of the Grace of God in order to bridge the gulf between the finite and the infinite and to crown his efforts with success by supplying the missing factor. It is a familiar experience that the burning flame placed above comes a little downwards in order to kindle the lamp placed below, when all outside obstructions caused by the winds have been removed and the flame is burning straight without any shiver. The transition from the finite to the infinite requires God's Grace in order to be accomplished. What cannot be achieved through process, what is above the mechanical chain of causes and effects, what lies in the kingdom of the spirit and is above the world of nature, can only be reached through the transcendent Grace of God which is above all process and all calculation. Both are true in their own levels: human effort has its full value in its own sphere as preparing the ground, and God's Grace is the transcendent revelation that takes the finite to the infinite. To the worshipper, it is the Divine Grace that is the only thing that secures salvation; to God, it is the worthy who are chosen.

Islam very often reminds its followers of the transcendence of God and of the remoteness of Allah and of the wide difference between the finite men and the infinite God, and although the nearness of God is sometimes supported from the texts of the Quran and the Sufis lay emphasis on these texts, still it can hardly be denied that the transcendent aspect of God is the predominant note of the Quran. The Quran seems to be always on the guard against the assimilation of God to the things of the world in order to prevent lapses into polytheism and is constantly harping on the thought that God is very far removed from this world and that there is nothing here that is like Him. The Christian conception of the kingdom of the spirit and its sharp division between what belongs to the spirit and what belongs to the flesh also have the same aim in view. Although the aspect of other-worldliness is not so prominent in Islam as it is in Christianity and in Hinduism, still the

constant remembrance of God in the daily prayers and the reference of everything to the absolute will of Allah can hardly have any other object than the recognition of the insignificance and worthlessness of the world and the sole reality of the spirit. Rāmānuja says that *dhruvāsmriti* or constant meditation leads to *sāksātkāra* (direct perception). The injunction of Islam regarding the daily prayers and the beneficient instruction to the worshipper to have the thought that Allah is before him when he is saying his prayers undoubtedly have been meant to generate what Rāmānuja calls *dhruvāsmriti* and what he identifies with real devotion or bhakti. The aspect of *ananyatva* which requires that *exclusive* attention, and not merely the greatest attention, should be paid to the object of devotion, is present in Islam and Christianity also, although it is not so finely elaborated there as it is done in Vaiṣṇavism. The great sage Nārada speaks of *tadarpitā-khilācāratā* or the dedication of all actions whatsoever to Him, and the devotee is to forget everything that rouses his sense of separate individuality and to attempt to merge himself in constant meditation of the Lord. If there is forgetting even for a moment, the devotee feels himself forlorn and is in great agony. Josiah Royce seems to express the true mark of devotion by a single term. " Loyalty ", according to him is " the willing and thorough-going devotion to a cause " [1] and this cause assumes a personal shape in religion. The presence of the object of religion in the world of the finite individual is a ' free gift from the realm of the spirit '. The Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism have laid great stress on the aspect of love and are in entire agreement with Royce who also holds that it is love that individuates. The object of love is an object of exclusive interest and there can be but one beloved for the true lover, ' one exclusively interesting object serving particular exclusive interest '. When attachment to the Absolute rises to such an intensity that the Absolute is felt to be an object of exclusive interest, so that nothing can take its place or be substituted for it, then only the attachment may be described as *ananyā bhakti* or the devotion that knows no other.

[1] *Sources of Religious Insight*, p. 206.

Josiah Royce speaks of this '*exclusive love that permits no other*' and which knows not why, and it is interesting to find that he uses the same language which the Vaiṣṇavas use. True *bhakti* is *ahetukī* and *avyabhicāriṇī*, utterly spontaneous and exclusive. An extensive literature has grown in Vaiṣṇavism depicting this aspect of devotion as love and there is hardly anything equal to it in beauty and excellence, in sublimity and suggestiveness, in depth and grandeur.

The Christian distinction between the life of the Law and the live of Love has its exact parallel in the *vaidhī bhakti* and the *rāganugā bhakti* of Vaiṣṇavism. So long as one does not feel spontaneous attraction towards God, one is to obey the law and strictly follow the rules laid down in the scriptures. No exception is to be allowed and the rigid discipline of spiritual life is obligatory on the neophyte. But as soon as spontaneous attraction is felt, as soon as one loves God, as soon as one cannot do without Him, the rule of the Law ceases and there is no longer any compulsion. The seeker reaches at this stage a safe ground from which there is no possibility of fall. The beauty of the spirit has been felt and it attracts automatically. There is no longer any effort of the will to fix attention on it; the object attracts of itself and directly. Attention becomes perfectly non-voluntary at this stage and God is loved for His own sake and not for anything which it is in the power of God to bestow on His worshippers. So long as God is worshipped for the sake of His favours, for the sake of something different from Him, there is danger and there is always the possibility of downfall, because there is nothing of real spirituality in such indirect worship. But as soon as the excellence of the spirit is recognised and felt, one is on the high road and has entered the safety zone and there is no possibility of going astray or missing the goal even if one runs with eyes closed. There is no necessity for any injunction or prohibition for a person who is filled with love for the spirit and is saturated with the thought of Divine Existence. The centre of his attention is always fixed on God and it is God who directly shows him the way. He has given up all thoughts about material things and no place is left for these things in his mind which is occupied solely with God. God has to look to his welfare, both material and

spiritual, simply because the sense of individuality which God created in him for managing his own affairs has ceased to work in him because of his voluntary resignation to the will of the Lord and of his conscious rising above the sense of separateness and the realisation of the universal spirit as equally present in all things.

The most important thing in Islam is its teaching of the universal brotherhood of men. In the eyes of God, all men are equal and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor. God is no respecter of persons, and contrasted with His greatness, all human beings, however exalted some of them may think themselves to be, are equally insignificant. Islam claims that a practical demonstration is given everyday in their congregational prayers of their doctrine of equality of all men when within the doors of the mosque, " all stand shoulder to shoulder, the king along with his poorest subject, the rich arrayed in gorgeous robes with the beggar clad in rags, the white man with the black." Before the Maker, all stand on the same footing and the rich man standing in a back row while prostrating himself before God has to lay his head at the feet of a beggar standing in the front row. It is doubtful, however, whether this by itself can justify any distinction between Islam and other religions. During prayer in the Church, the Christians also make no distinction between the rich and the poor and all Christians are brethren to each other. But the fact of practical demonstration is perhaps not the important point. If the special message of Christianity is Divine Love and if the special message of Islam is the universal brotherhood of men, it is because of their emphasis on the fatherhood of God and on the oneness of the Maker. God is not merely the stern ruler who punishes every infringement of His laws, not merely the omnipotent and absolute governor who does whatever He likes, but also the compassionate Father who loves His children and who has created them not to send them to Hell but to save them and take them back in Heaven. God has created man after His own image and there is a great deal of affinity between the Creator and His creatures. There is an element of holiness, an element of spirituality, an element of divinity in man and man can hope to reach God because of

what has been implanted in his nature. God has freely given to man something of Himself and has sent His only begotten son to remind them of the gift and to make them realise the divinity that is in them and to show that the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the spirit is not an empty dream or a far-off event but is a thing that has in one sense been already accomplished. This aspect of nearness or affinity between God and man is what has been sought to be taught by the Christian conception of Love. 'God loves man' merely means that he has endowed man with a nature that is like unto that of Himself, and it is possible for man to love God in return and to love his fellow-beings and other creatures only because of God's love or what he has received from Him. This fundamental fact of the inherent divinity of man is what is sought to be indicated by the Christian conception of the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of man. Similarly, the universal brotherhood of man preached by Islam merely means that God is the Maker of all men and that as all have come out of the same source there is no fundamental distinction between man and man. Religion is based on the clear recognition of a common source of all things and beings, and all talks about love and charity or about universal brotherhood become meaningless if there is not the realisation of brotherhood, that is, of the oneness of the source of all. The Upaniṣads speak of the One Reālity that pervades the entire universe and put forward this as the argument why persons should not quarrel amongst themselves for loaves and fishes but should have a spirit of 'give and take' and should not (unreasonably) cast a greedy glance at what belongs to another '.[1] If the realisation that everything is God is not yet forthcoming, the thought that everything has come from God is at least necessary. If there is still the belief that salvation is for Christians alone and not for everybody who has been led by the spirit of God or has been created after the image of God, or that while each nation has its own prophet, Muhammad alone is the world prophet and that salvation is only for those who accept Muhammad as such, it is an entire misinterpretation of what was intended to be conveyed by

[1] *Isopanishad*, verse I.

God's love and His fatherhood, on the one hand, and by the Universal brotherhood of mankind. If Allah is the creator of all things and beings, brotherhood should be extended to the whole of creation instead of being confined to the so-called 'believers' or followers of a particular faith. Passages in the Bible or in the Quran or in the Gītā and in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa are not wanting which would indicate clearly universal brotherhood in the sense in which alone it has any meaning and it is only narrow sectarianism that is responsible for unduly restricting the meaning of the term by citing passages which certainly cannot overthrow the meaning of the other texts forming the very foundation of religion. The study of comparative religion becomes useless if it cannot extend the horizon of narrow sectarianism and prevent ill-feeling and the spread of calumny by one religion against other religions.

LECTURE VII

THE SUPRA-PERSONAL RELIGIONS

I

The Vedanta

Great difficulty is felt by the western mind in understanding the Impersonal, or correctly speaking, the Supra-personal religions. The Vedanta, as interpreted by Saṁkara, is perhaps the best representative of these religions. There are evident indications of this transcendental religion in Taoism, in Sufism and also in the Gospel of St. John, but it is in the Vedanta that we have a systematic presentation of the subject and a full philosophical discussion justifying the necessity of passing from the personal to the Supra-personal stage. I propose to deal with the Vedanta first and also at some length not only because it is taken to be the special achievement that is representative of the Indian mind but also because its transcendental heights are so puzzling to the theistically trained western mind. I shall lay special emphasis on the points which are generally misunderstood and shall attempt to answer the charges that are often levelled against the Vedanta. It is quite natural that a difficulty will be felt in understanding the vedantic standpoint just because it is so very different from what is familiar to men in other parts of the world, and I think it needs no apology if a substantial part of these lectures be devoted to the interpretation of this sublime religion and the removal of the common misapprehensions. That there is still necessity for this task half a century after Swami Vivekananda's address in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and inspite of the continued and persistent efforts of his disciples, is entirely proved by the statement of Dean Inge, "There is no loss of consciousness, as in Indian thought; but self-consciousness is now God-Consciousness."[1] It is difficult to understand how

[1] *God and the Astronomers*, p. 278.

of all the systems of philosophy, the Vedanta, the first and last word of which is consciousness, could be supposed to be advocating loss of consciousness as its goal. Brahman or the Absolute is described as *sat* (being), *cit* (consciousness) and *ananda* (bliss), and anybody who has read even the rudiments of the system cannot commit the mistake of supposing the non-existence of consciousness at any stage. Brahman is all-consciousness, and even if all other elements are missed in it, consciousness can never be supposed to be absent. Brahman is *trikālasthita*, endures through the past, present and the future and is also beyond time (kalāparicchinna). It is *nitya*, *śāśvata*, eternal and never non-existent, and it is *cit*, consciousness itself. How does Dr. Inge find here loss of consciousness? Not that he does not understand the rising of the individual consciousness to the level of universal consciousness, the *jīva* (individual) becoming Brahman. He definitely speaks of self-consciousness becoming God-consciousness. The Vedanta speaks of the identity of God and man, Brahman and Jīva, on the basis of this experience, this self-consciousness becoming God-consciousness, and the *ātmabrahmaikya*, the oneness of self and Brahman, is the central theme of the vedantic doctrine, and if any other doctrine speaks of any such thing or anything approaching it, the Vedanta is most likely be its original. It is really strange that Dean Inge should be speaking of this very experience and stating that it is *not as in Indian thought*. It indicates colossal ignorance of the vedantic system which represents Indian thought in its best form.

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad this very question has been raised and answered. The great sage Yājnavalkya tells his wife Maitreyi that the Ātman or Brahman, the universal consciousness, is the sole support and substratum of this universe and that when all effects are dissolved, the Ātman alone remains and all the individualised special forms which owe their origin to contact with the adjuncts disappear and the individual names and designations no longer remain. Just as the lump of salt is all salt both inside and outside, so also the Ātman is all-consciousness, *prajnānaghana*, of the nature of *prajnāna* or knowledge itself both inside and outside

and everywhere, and there is no *viśeṣa saṁjñā*, no special form, no individuation, no separating, no demarcating at this stage. Maitreyi becomes puzzled and asks : How can it be all-knowledge and still devoid of knowledge (*saṁjñā*)? Yājnavalkya answers saying :[1] " I am only giving you a true description of the ultimate stage of realisation. This is *amṛtatva*, this is what is meant by real immortality. The Ātman is endless (avināśī) and does not admit of extinction (anucchittidharmā). I am not wilfully puzzling you. Do not for a moment suppose that with the extinction of the upādhis or adjuncts or the principles of individuation and separation, the Ātman also disappears. There is no *viśeṣa saṁjñā*, no individual consciousness, because that which is responsible for the separating is no longer present but has been identified with the Absolute or universal consciousness. When the Absolute assumes a bifurcated aspect (yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati), the subject sees, smells, hears, touches and knows the object, but when everything becomes the Ātman, when the not-self becomes merged in the self, when the subject-object division disappears, when one is raised beyond the level of division and bifurcation to the kingdom of the divisionless Absolute, how can one see or smell or hear or touch or know the other? That by what everything is known cannot be made the object of knowledge in any way."[2] Yājnavalkya is here clearly referring to a stage where the individual loses its name and form, its separateness and its individuality, but is at the same time emphasising strongly that this transcendental stage of realisation does not lack consciousness. The Ātman which shines in its full glory at this stage unhampered by any superimposition, by any limiting or restricting process, is all-consciousness and all-enduring and extinctionless. It is only the limitation, the division and bifurcation, that is withdrawn; but the all-pervading consciousness, the self, does not disappear along with it. There is no loss of consciousness, but only loss of *restrictions or limitations of consciousness*. Dean Inge is at liberty to accept or reject the vedantic view, but it is sheer misrepresentation to say that Indian thought preaches loss of consciousness.

[1] IV, v, 14.
[2] IV, v, 15.

The Western mind feels no difficulty in understanding the vedantic Absolute when it is described as the source and support of all things or as that from which the universe springs, that in which it lives, moves and has its being and in which it is dissolved. He understands very well when the Absolute is described as the All (sarva), as the soul of everything (sarvātmā), and as the substratum of all adjuncts (sarvopādhi). But when it is also described as having no specific characters (nirupākhya), as unalloyed by any adjuncts (nirastasarvopādhi) and as utterly indeterminate (nirastasarvaviśeṣam), and when all characterisations are dismissed as 'neti neti' 'not this, not this', in order to indicate that its real nature is pure consciousness undisturbed by any limiting adjunct, it baffles the western mind altogether. It is not merely the Vedanta that has been thus misunderstood. The greatest minds of Europe, Plato Aristole, Plotinus, Spinoza, Kant and Hegel have all been misinterpreted, and the highest flights of their ratiocination, the sublime results of their philosophy, have been dismissed as inconsistent without stopping for a moment to consider how these masters could be guilty of those glaring inconsistencies which they are charged with. Plato's Ideas, Aristotle's Active Intelligence, Plotinus's Nous, Spinoza's Indeterminate Substance, Kant's Noumenon and Hegel's Negative Movement have all suffered the same fate at the hands of their commentators who are generally third-rate men who could not soar up to the heights attained by those great minds. I have dealt with this aspect of the philosophy of these masters elaborately in another book[1] and hence I refrain from pursuing this topic further. Edward Caird speaks of the sublime inconsequence of Spinoza's philosophy and charges him with 'utter disregard of his own logical principle'',[2] because he regards his substance to be both indeterminate and self-determined. Spinoza's substance has been compared to the lion's den into which all footprints lead but from which none comes out. The *determinatio est negatio* has been entirely misunderstood and has been supposed to be rendering the subs-

[1] *The Masters: Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and Samkara* (in the Press).

[2] *The Evolution of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 105.

tance a void or a blank. The vedantic Absolute has been regarded as the purest of abstractions and has been identified with Nothing. It is high time to point out that these seemingly opposite tendencies, the Indeterminate and the self-determined, the *neti neti* and the *sarvam khalvidaṁ brahman*, the Nothing and the All, are not 'products of imperfect reflection' as Caird supposes, but are necessary expressions of the transcendental stage of realisation.

It is true that the Vedanta speaks of Brahman as the sole reality and of the universe as illusory and false. But it is also true that the Vedanta speaks of the universe as *satyam* (real) and Brahman as *satyasya satyam*, as the truth of the truth. It is evident that the Vedanta does not lay any great emphasis on the mere use of terms. It does not matter much whether we call the world real or unreal, *satya* or *mithyā*, so long as we bear in mind the true significance of what is implied by it. If the Absolute is real, the world is unreal; if the world is real, the Absolute is the truth underlying the real or what appears to be real. It is true that the world is not as real as the Absolute; the fleeting, transitory things of the world cannot be supposed to possess the enduring reality of the Timeless. When the world is declared to be false (*mithyā*) all that is meant to indicate is that its reality is less (*nyūna-sattāka*) than the reality of the Absolute. The Vedanta does not deny the workability or the *vyavahārika sattā* or the empirical reality of the universe, but it denies only its transcendental reality, its pāramārthika or absolute reality. Those who ascribe reality to the universe mean by it only empirical reality. A thing that appears now and disappears next moment or next year or next century cannot be supposed to possess absolute reality. The Vedanta never denies *vyavahārika sattā* or empirical reality of the universe and so when it is said that the Vedanta explains away the universe, it is an entire misunderstanding of the system. Nobody ascribes transcendental or absolute reality to the universe and if the Vedanta takes this only from the universe, it is not in any way different from the view of the ordinary man. If by the real (satya) we mean empirical reality (vyavahārika satya), the world is real and then Brahman or the Absolute is to be described as *satyasya satyam* as the truth underlying the

Energy (Prāṇa) that holds the universe. If, on the other hand, by the real, we mean the absolutely real, the real that holds itself in all relations, there is only one such thing and that is the transcendental Brahman, and everything else is to be declared *mithyā* (false), in contrast with it. Brahman supports the universe in all relations. Even if the universe is regarded as *mithyā*, as illusion and false superimposition, Brahman is its substratum (adhisṭhāna). If the universe is regarded as *satya* (real), Brahman is its underlying truth. So we find Brahman does not ignore the world, but explains it. The world has no existence apart from Brahman and the explanation of the world is to be found in Brahman. The Vedanta never commits the mistake of placing the world outside Brahman and thus admitting an 'other' to the Absolute. Whatever reality the world has, it is in Brahman, and it can never form the antithesis to Brahman. The world is not opposed to Brahman, Brahman is not what is not the world. It is an entire misunderstanding on the part of western scholars to suppose that the vedantic Brahman denies the world. That would have been a form of dualism, implying an unreconciled opposition in the shape of the universe, which vedantism takes as its sole mission to uproot. The Vedantic Brahman does not deny the world, does not oppose it, but resolves the world into itself, absorbs it within itself, and explains it in the most satisfactory way by showing it to be nothing but itself. It is *sarvānubhūti*, it feels everything to be its innermost essence. It assumes all forms in order to show its real essence. The great mantra of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, *rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhuva tadasya rūpam praticakshanaya*.—It assumed all forms in order that its real nature may be revealed, expresses a highly significant truth. The whole task of the Vedanta seems to be to prove that the world is nothing but Brahman, that the not-self is not really anything outside or different from the self, that the not-self is not alien and foreign to the self but is only a self-alienation, a self imposition, an *āhārya adhyāsa*, a voluntary make-believe, a negative moment, which is an assuming only and no real division. It explains the world by identifying it with its own self and this is the highest expalnation that the universe can hope to attain. The uni-

verse not only proceeds from the Absolute, as in theism, but it never leaves the Absolute even when it appears to be alien to and different from it. It is the very same identical Absolute, only with the adjuncts of names and forms superimposed on it. Is it not wilful perversity to say that the Vedanta does not offer any explanation of the universe? Certainly its explanation is not identical with that given by theism. But does it not go deeper?

The Absolute is All and None at once. It possesses all qualities—it is *sarvagandhaḥ*, *sarvarasaḥ*, it includes all smell, all taste and everything that there is in the universe. There is nothing in this universe that is not enveloped by it within and without. If it had not assumed names and forms, it would not have revealed itself. As pure consciousness, as *prajñānaghana*, it is without any division or adjunct, but in order to make itself realisable it has to take innumerable shapes. This is the only way to express the Inexpressible, to reveal through adjuncts what is in reality without any adjunct at all. This assuming of forms by the formless happens through its creative energy (māyā) and its infinite intelligence (prajñā). The Upanishads declare, "After having created all things it entered into them." This creation and entrance into the created objects are all *kālpanika*, mere appearance and nothing real. There is no change, no *vikāra*, no transformation, and there can be no change simply because it is not only *ekarasa* but also *ekamevādvitīyam*, not only because there is no foreign element inside it but also because there is nothing outside it. What seems to be an 'other', the whole created object, is only a reflection (pratibimba) and there is only an imaginary entrance into the reflected object. The Ātman or Brahman which is all-pervading and without any division cannot be supposed to be physically entering anything which implies movement from one place or direction to another. The entrance of the Absolute merely implies the descending of the Absolute into the level of the human intellect so that it may be realised by the latter, and is to be taken as entirely metaphorical. The whole theory of creation has been introduced in the Upanishads in order to show that everything has its source, sustenance and end in the Absolute and that in reality there is

nothing but the Absolute. The Upanishads everywhere proclaim monism and condemn pluralism, and the theory of creation cannot have been intended to show that there are really other things than the Absolute. The theory of creation, which traces everything to the Absolute, definitely establishes that the multiplicity and the variety of the universe are all seeming and unreal, and that at the bottom of them all lies the unchanging one, the homogeneous (ekarasa) Absolute. The creation is for its revelation, for its realisation by the human intellect, for its self-enjoyment, for its unending bliss, for its *līlā*, for the exuberance of its joy, for its sport as it were. The Vedanta teaches through *adhyāropa* and *apavāda*, imposition and withdrawal. It shows by its theory of creation that whatever is there has its source in the Absolute and it preaches that the Absolute is All. There is creation of innumerable forms—an imposition or assumption of endless variety. This is *adhyāropa*. But the endless variety itself contains elements of its cancellation. The opposites cancel one another and leave the substratum untouched by them. He took all forms in order to show that He is beyond them all. He transcends everything because He is in every thing. He is *sarvātīta* because He is *sarvagata*. The Absolute transcends All by being identical with the All. His real nature cannot be revealed in any one of the opposing characteristics. He cannot be both extended and unextended, both near and far, both small and great, both here and there, both past and present, but He is all of these at once. This shows that the Vedanta is expressing the great truth through these contradictory statements that the Absolute is beyond the categories of time and space, beyond causality and magnitude. The Absolute is not anything that belongs to the finite world. How can It be limited to the partial aspects represented by the things of the finite world? If It be one, It cannot be other ; if It is this, It cannot be that. That is the way of the finite. How can this be applicable to the Absolute? So it is said that the Absolute is none of these things of this universe. It is All, because there is nothing apart from It—everything that there is has its source and substance in It. It is none of these, because It is not limited. Just because It is the All, It is also the None; just because It is everything,

It is not anything in particular. This is the real meaning of Spinoza's *determinatio est negatio* as well as of the so-called negative method of the Vedanta. If the Absolute is described as *asthūlam, ananu, ahrasvam, adīrgham,* as that which is neither thick nor thin, neither short nor tall, as *agandham arasam,* as that which has neither taste nor smell, as *neti neti,* as not this, not this, meaning thereby a denial of all finite characteristics as such, the evident intention is to show the absence of limitation of the Absolute and not to indicate its utter blankness. What is determined in one direction is thereby excluded from others and if one is to describe the real Absolute, the Perfect Freedom, the *abhayam* and the *amṛtam,* the Reality that transcends all limitation and destruction, all trace of an 'other', all trace of a second, of anything other than itself which may limit it and thwart it and cause its destruction, there is no other way but to describe it as the Vedanta, and Spinoza in modern times, have done. When it is said that Brahman is the All and that everything is Brahman (*sarvam khalvidam brahman*) it is to indicate that there is nothing apart from Brahman; that it is the infinite that underlies the finite. When, again, it is said that nothing of the universe is Brahman, that everything of this universe is false and unreal (mithyā), it is to indicate that the infinite transcends the finite, that the infinite is not to be confused with the sum of the finites, that the infinite is not to be identified with the finite, that the grandeur of the infinite not only pales the finite into insignificance but absorbs the finite into itself leaving nothing beside or behind it to disturb or cancel its infinitude. When the infinite dawns in consciousness or rather when man is raised to the level of the infinite, it is not possible to retain his finitude and enjoy at the same time the expansion and bliss of infinitude. Either the infinite is conceived of as only an exalted finite by the side of which the previous finitude remains in contrast or the realisation falls short of the apprehension of the Infinite. If it is a realisation of the Infinite, if the finite, in other words, has really recognised its infinitude, it is impossible to be conscious of one's finitude at this stage and the question of the relation of the Infinite *and* the finite seems here to be absurd. The Infinite must be all-pervading, all-inclusive

if it is anything worth the designation, and everything apart from it or different from it has got to be denied, and this is all that is meant by the Vedantic denial of the universe. The finite not only is, but it is the Infinite. If one seeks a finite apart from the Infinite, it is a mirage, a delusion. The finite can retain its reality so long as the Infinite is not seen, but when the Infinite is in sight, when one becomes the Infinite, how can the finite retain its reality? If the Infinite is divided by its finite contents, if the finite seeks to retain its reality as part and parcel of the Infinite, it is only a spurious Infinite that can allow it. It is the sumtotal of the finites claiming the throne of the Infinite in disguise. There is no variety, no multiplicity, no heterogeneity in Pure consciousness, in the spirit as such, in *Citswarūpa*. Unless there be a touch of matter, a touch of something alien or foreign to spirit, there cannot be a division and a separation. The Upanishads have proclaimed the perfect identity of the transcendental Self or the Ātman and the Absolute (Brahman). The Ātman, the transcendental Self, is not a part of Brahman. The principle of division, separation and individuation, that is, Matter, is not any constituent in Pure Spirit and hence the Absolute Spirit does not admit of any relation of part and whole. As *cinmātra*, *cidekarasa*, as *prajnānaghanarasa*, as pure consciousness, there is not the slightest difference between the Ātman and Brahman. As soon as all foreign elements associated with the spirit are eliminated, as soon as all *upādhis* or limiting adjuncts supplied by matter are transcended, the Ātman realises that it is without disease, death or destruction —*ajaram amaram amṛtam* and that it is above all impurities, that it is absolutely pure, untouchable and unsoilable by any impurity, *śuddham apāpaviddham*, and it at once identifies itself with the Absolute. There is no way of differentiating the individual self and the Absolute at this stage, the principle of separation and individuation, *viz.*, matter, having been left behind at the earlier stages. The identity of the individual and the Absolute is at this stage no mere dogma, no mere theory, but a fact of direct realisation where a differentiation becomes impossible, *yatra tu sarvam ātmaiva abhūt*—where everything becomes the self, and the not-self is totally absorbed in the self.

It is the same thing whether we call the world real or unreal. When we identify it with the Absolute we may call it real ; when we notice its difference from the Absolute we may call it unreal. The rope that appears as the false snake gives all the reality to the snake that appears. When one traces the snake to the rope and finds that it is nothing but the rope, one may identify it with the rope in the sense that it is only the rope that appears as the snake. The snake is real in the reality of the rope ; in other words, the snake is the rope and nothing apart from it. When, however, the knowledge takes the form : "it is a rope and not a snake; that which appeared to be a snake is not a snake but a rope," the snake is definitely perceived to be false. The reality of the snake is denied as anything different or apart from the rope. The snake is the rope and the snake is not the rope—both of these statements are true and indicate the same thing. 'The snake is the rope', merely means that what appeared as a snake is nothing but the rope. 'The snake is not the rope', means that the perception of the snake is false, but this is also what is indicated by the first assertion. The snake is the rope, because the snake is not real as a snake but only as the rope. If Brahman is the underlying reality of the universe, if the nameless and formless Brahman, the Indeterminate Substance, be the truth of this universe of infinite variety and multiplicity, it does not matter whether we call this universe real or unreal. The names and forms, when traced to the Nameless and Formless, are found to be false. They are not real as they are in themselves but only as traceable to the Nameless. But, again, inasmuch as they are so traceable, inasmuch as they are nothing but the appearances of the Nameless or the Nameless itself in the guise of names and forms, they may be regarded as real, not in the sense of belonging to the real but as the real itself. This is what explains the double movement of the Vedanta, the *sarvam khalvidam brahma* and the *neti neti*, the All and the None, the supposed acosmism and the atheism of Spinoza. When the world is not seen but only the Absolute is perceived, it is acosmism; the all-pervading Absolute has devoured up the world so to speak. It is the Absolute everywhere and there is nothing but the Absolute. The Absolute is and the

world is not ; because nothing apart from the Absolute is visible. When, however, the world is perceived to be identical with the Absolute, when the world is viewed as real in the reality of the Absolute, the world seems to take up the reality of the Absolute and it seems to be atheism. Because on this view the world does not belong to the Absolute but is the Absolute in disguise, because names and forms or what has been designated as Modes by Spinoza are only adventitious ideas or appearances perceived by the sense, are only limited and false apprehensions of the Nameless and the Formless, of the unlimited and the indeterminate, the theory has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. That which is not limited, that which as pure spirit is not at all divisible into parts, that which being without the least touch of materiality is perfectly speechless, nameless and formless, is seen by the dividing intellect to be limited and divided into parts, to be full of names and forms. Names and forms are true within the range of the senses and the intellect. Beyond the intellect, in the level of the infinite reason, they have no place. Viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, the divisions shown by the intellect disappear. Spinoza's distinction of *Imaginatio*, *Ratio* and *Intuitio* is of great value in understanding the relation of the One and the Many. To *imaginatio* or the lowest grade of knowledge, the many appear to be real, the plurality shown by the senses are taken to be fundamental. To *ratio* or the rational understanding, the second grade of knowledge, the many-in-one or the one-in-many seems to be real. Things are considered not as individuals but in their necessary connections with one another. It is rational knowledge attained through inference. The highest grade of knowledge, the *intuitio*, considers all things *sub specie aeternitatis*, and finds that "all ideas so far as they are referred to God are true". It is an underivative knowledge, an original and an immediate intuition of reason, a thoroughly adequate idea, a truth that is accompanied by certainty and is its own witness (II prop. 43 schol). It has its eyes fixed on the one and it perceives things as eternal sequences from the world-ground.

Spinoza's distinction of the three grades of knowledge shows us clearly that the Many, the Many-in-one and the

One are taken to be real at the three successive stages. Hegel's criticism of Spinozistic Substance seems to be out of mark, as Spinoza had made ample provision for the Hegelian Absolute in the second stage of knowledge. That *intuitio* represents the highest grade of knowledge and transcends *ratio* proves that Spinoza's substance is not poorer than Hegel's Absolute Idea. There is a fuller grasp than that of the ratiocinative reason proceeding by stages; there is here an immediate apprehension and intuition which sees things not under the category of time but under the guides of eternity, a rising above everything finite and temporal, a direct perception of the infinite as the ground of all things and immediate identification with it, a stage of intellectual love of God, a feeling of blessedness which is felt not merely as the reward of virtue but as virtue itself, a realisation of perfect peace and highest freedom of the Soul, a tasting of immortality in the adequate cognition and love of God.

Spinoza has no hesitation in saying that modes are real to *imaginatio* but unreal to *intuitio;* the Vedanta freely declares that the world is real to common sense and that it has empirical but not trancendental reality. If Kant also declares that the world of phenomena is only empirically real but transcendentally ideal, if space, time and causality are all confined to the phenomenal world and are declared by him to have no applicability to the world of noumena, it is difficult to understand why the westerners should find the vedantic position so unintelligible. The solution offered by all master thinkers as regards the problem of the One and the Many is very much the same. It is the same in Plato and Plotinus, in Spinoza and Leibnitz, in Kant and Hegel, in Buddha and Saṁkara. Sense knowledge or the apprehension of the many is a mere opinion, an imperfect representation, a confused perception, an inadequate idea, a mere empirical or phenomenal view, is a position that is self-contradictory or contains its antithesis within it and is sublated by it, a view-point that cannot maintain itself but is contradicted. Plato finds the desired resting place in the Idea, Spinoza in the Substance, Kant in his Noumenon, Hegel in his Absolute Idea, Buddha in his Śūnya or the Great Void, Saṁkara in his Brahman. The One and the Many belong to different orders of reality and

they cannot be placed together. The many represent the One confusedly, show the One imperfectly and inadequately present the One which is indivisible and infinite, unlimited and free, as divided and segmented, as finite and dependent. It is a false logic which finds satisfaction regarding the Many to be an expression and revelation of the One. If the One contains the seeds of the Many in it, if the many are already present in the One in embryo, this is no explanation of the Many. What was the many *latent* now becomes the many *patent* The *many* remains the many. If, on the other hand, there is no indication of the many in the One, if the many are really new to the One, there is the violation of the principle *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and to say that the many come out of the One without showing how that becomes possible amounts to a mere bold assertion. If the multiplicity, the names and the forms, really imply an addition, it is unscientific to put more in the effect than there is in the cause. If, on the other hand, they do not imply any addition, is it not correct to say that the One merely appears as the Many, that the Nameless and Formless has appeared in names and forms without undergoing any transformation, that it has remained what it always is while producing the appearance of names and forms?

The Vedanta reconciles the One and the Many by saying that the Many do not really exist but owe their existence to ignorance (ajnāna). It is ignorance or ajnāna that shows the One to be Many. The One remains what it is for ever without any change. The appearance of the Many is an *adhyāropa*, a superimposition, that is withdrawn or rejected as soon as true knowledge arises. The One and the Many are not both real. The One never becomes the Many nor is there a manifold oneness. The maniness is an appearance, a false show, due to adjuncts (upādhi) and is corrected as soon as the adjuncts are perceived to possess no reality. The Many do not stand in opposition to the One simply because they retain their reality so long as they are not perceived to be mere modifications, unsubstantial changes and appearances as distinct from the eternal and unchanging One. The many selves are like the innumerable reflections of the sun in different water-pots and just as the reflections disappear when

there is no longer water and the one sun shines alone, so also when ignorance which is the root cause of the different appearances is removed, the maniness disappears and the One Cit, the universal self, the all-pervading consciousness alone shines. It is never to be forgotten that it is only the individuality, the separateness, the differentiation, the *nāma-rūpa*, that is denied and that the universal consciousness, the transcendental self, the pure differenceless *cit*, where there is no room for any heterogeneity or division, is never sought to be denied. Wherever there is any suspicion of any talk of annihilation or extinction in the Upanishads, it is always to be understood as the extinction of maniness or the extinction of ignorance which is the source of the manifold, extinction of the Ātman or the self, of cit or consciousness which is *nitya*, being inadmissible. What disappears is the *viśeṣa*, the special name and the form due to *avidyā* (ignorance) and not the Cit or the self itself.

The Vedanta rejects the conception of the Many-in-one as a flat contradiction. The One which seems to realise itself in and through the many, which has the many as its content, which seems to be a blank without the many, which is supposed by Hegel and his followers to be the concrete universal as distinct from the Abstract universal of the Vedanta, is really not one but is virtually Many. If the One is supposed to contain the many inherently, if the One is not what it is without the many, it becomes non-permanent (anitya). That which consists of parts (sāvayava), that which performs actions, that which has 'many' as its content (anekātmaka) cannot be eternal and permanent (sāvayavasya anekatmakasya kriyāvato nityatvānupapatteh). How can the Many which undergo change and construction form the content of the unchangeable and the deathless? The Hegelian category of the One-in-many applies well to the finite things of the world which undergo change and development (pariṇāmī). But how can it be supposed to apply to the Absolute Reality, the *kuṭastha nitya*, the Reality that never changes and needs no change or development? The partaking of a double character—change and no change—is possible on the part of things belonging to the world of duality and division, belonging to the world of time and temporal relations. But how can the

Absolute which is beyond and above all temporal relations be supposed to be changing? The fact is that although the Absolute is stated to be above time, it is very often conceived to be only Duration filling up the divisions of time and is not understood to be beyond the category of time altogether. The Western thinkers habituated to theistic modes of interpretation fail to understand the real significance of the Timeless and confuse between the Eternity that gathers up all time within it and the Absolute that transcends time and eternity altogether. There is no continuity between what is beyond time and what is in time, and if the Vedanta declares that the things of the world, the events in time, are all illusory and unreal, it is because appearances in time cannot affiliate themselves to the timeless Absolute. The temporal divisions and the things that owe their existence to them lose all meaning in the Timeless Beyond. The Eternal or the Timeless that finds itself revealed through time is only spurious and is nothing but compressed time. It is timeless in the sense that it contains the past, present and the future within it and not in the sense in which the genuine Timeless transcends all temporal relations. To think that there is no gap between the timeless and time, to think that these are correlatives is to confuse between the *pariṇāmi nitya* and the *kuṭastha nitya*, between the relatively timeless Eternity and the Absolute beyond all time. The Eternity that manifests itself through time is the concrete universal of Hegel and the Supreme Reality of Sri Aurobindo, and as it synthesises the two abstractions of a dead static unity on the one hand and an ungrounded plurality on the other is certainly a step higher than the one-sided abstractions. But the Upanishadic seers have definitely given hint of another vision which completely surpasses the Hegelian synthesis and reconciliation. It is a vision where the Timeless Beyond and the temporal relations have been seen in their proper perspectives. Time and temporal divisions are here felt to be *ahārya adhyāsa*, conscious and voluntary assumptions and not continuation of the Timeless. As assumptions they do not touch or affect the Timeless at all. This is what is meant by real transcendence. The Vedantic Brahman, the absolutely Timeless, does not exclude time and is not opposed to time, as is ordinarily supposed by

the theists. Time does not fall outside the timeless and there is no opposition between Brahman and *jagat*, between the Absolute and the universe, between the Timeless and what is in time. If the vedantic Absolute admits of anything outside it, of anything other than it, it thereby gives up at once its unqualified and absolute monism. The vedantist logician is too cautious to be guilty of such easy fallacies. The world of time is the Absolute's own creation, is an appearance of the Timeless and as such is included within it. As an appearance, it cannot have any reality apart from its substratum. It cannot, therefore, be said that the vedantic Brahman excludes the world while Hegel's Absolute includes it, or that Samkara's Brahman is an abstraction or a partial experience while Sri Aurobindo's Integral Experience " gathers together all experience in the truth of a supreme and all-reconciling oneness". It is true that the Vedantic Absolute is not a mere aggregation or integration of the finite, that the vedantic Timeless is not a mere summing up of what happens through all time, that the vedantic way of transcedence is something very different from that of Hegel and of Sri Aurobindo. When the timeless and what is in time, when the eternal and the temporal, are stated to be correlatives by Hegel and Sri Aurobindo, there remains no doubt that according to them the Timeless is only one member of the opposition between unity and plurality and that they are eager to put together what is in both. They seem to rest content with the thought that what contains both the temporal and the eternal must be richer than either. But we have seen that the eternal that they speak of is not the genuine timeless, not what transcends the category of time, but only one of the divisions and components of the category of time. It is nothing but the relatively unchanging that is in contrast with the changing, nothing but one of the moments of the working of time, and however the Hegelian or the Aurobindite Absolute might be supposed to be the integration of the timeless and the temporal, it is nothing but what expresses itself in time and has nothing of the real Timeless in it. It, and not the vedantic Absolute, is a partial category. The vedantic Absolute is the genuinely timeless that transcends time and just because it *transcends*, in the real sense of the term, it includes

the temporal within it, not by way of aggregation, it is true, but by way of absorption. Transcendence is something very different from negation or opposition. There is no doubt, an annulment or a negative moment, but there is also the affirmation or the absorption. If there is only negation, there is no transcendence; if, again, there is bare affirmation, then also there is no transcendence. It won't do if we merely say that Brahman is the world; we have also to say that Brahman is not the world. We have to see not only how the temporal is in the eternal; we have also to see how time has no applicability to and meaning in the timeless, how time is both affirmed and negated in the timeless. That which was so long being taken as the snake is now found to be the rope; therefore, the snake is the rope. But the snake is not the rope; there is a world of difference between the two. When one sees through the whole process, when one sees how it is and how it is not the Absolute, one gains the transcendent vision. A person who first took the rope to be a snake had no knowledge of the rope but only of the snake. He next realises that what was seen in the dark as a snake is seen to be a rope in clear light. He then identifies the two—the falsely appearing snake and the rope, or what appears to be in time and the timeless. This is transcendent vision. Is the snake eliminated? Is the temporal world that appears negated? The answer must be a 'no'. The snake that appeared is fully explained as having its origin in the rope seen in the dark. If the curd is explained when it is traced to milk, is not the snake or the temporal world explained when it is traced to the rope or the timeless? The snake that appeared is fully affirmed or absorbed in the rope. But is it an affirmation then? The answer here also is a 'no'. There is no affirmation of the snake in the rope. There is a rejection, a denial, it may be said. The snake is a false appearance, the rope is the reality, and there lies all the difference between the real and the unreal. The knowledge of the rope as the substratum of the false appearance of the snake is the vision which affirms as well as denies, which absorbs as well as cancels simultaneously, which, in short, transcends all previous experiences. If the transcendent experience is declared real, the partial experiences have to be

declared unreal being very different from the former. The 'Timeless Eternal' of the theists only affirms the divisions of time, the multiplicity and the variety of the universe. It is nothing but the condensification in duration of what is manifested elaborately in time. The theists get alarmed at the thought of negation or elimination. Their conception of the timeless is not to be identified with the transcendent conception of the Vedanta. There must be a gap between the timeless and time simply because the timeless is *noumenal* in the language of Kant, *pāramārthika* according to Śaṁkara, and time is phenomenal or *Vyavahārika*. The timeless which holds time in its bosom is only the *kāraṇa* state, the unmanifested causal condition of what is manifested in time. There is a world of difference between this timeless and the *turīya* or the transcendent that is above time. There is no continuity between time and the timeless, and when there is an ascent to the real timeless, there is experienced a leap, a jump to a transcendent stage where 'yes' and 'no', affirmation and denial, lose their antagonism and find a reconciliation that is unknown in the preceding stages. The Vedantist who explains the 'many' as false appearance does not realise the unreality of the 'many' in a mystic trance or in an exclusive state of concentration, as Sri Aurobindo supposes, but finds the reality of the 'many' contradicted (*bādhitā*) by the higher experience of the timeless one. The vedantist does not believe in the *laya-samādhi* (rejection) of the yogins but preaches *bādha-samādhi* (transcendence). The unreality of the lower category is a perceived fact in the simultaneous experience of the higher and the lower. The reality of the superior experience establishes itself by reducing the lower experience to the level of the unreal. The world is real so long as it is not presented to the Absolute Order. The simultaneity of the timeless and the temporal cannot but reduce the latter to the level of the unreal. The great distinction that the Vedanta draws between the *asat* and the *mithyā*, between the non-existent and the unreal, should never be lost sight of. The world is not *asat* (non-existent) but *mithyā* (unreal), that is, it cannot hold its reality in the face of the Absolute. The reality of the Absolute reduces it to the category of the unreal. That the world appears to be real

is never questioned. The issue is to settle whether it is also ultimately real. If its only claim to reality is that it appears to be real to the senses, if its *pratīti* or experience is the sole ground of its reality (*sattā*), we are accepting a dangerous criterion. The dream and the hallucination also appear to be real. Are they also to be taken as real? If this criterion is accepted, the distinction between the real and the unreal falls to the ground. It is, therefore, contended by the Vedantist that not every presentation but a presentation that is never contradicted can alone have claim to reality. This criterion is satisfied only by the Absolute and as such it alone is real in the full sense of the term. That this is the real view of the Vedanta is clear when it says that the world is unreal (*mithyā*) because it is *paricchinna* (limited), because it is *dṛśya* (object of sight) and because it is *jaḍa* (different from *cit*). If this be the real view of the Vedanta, who would not agree with it? Is there anybody who will say that the objects of senses are not limited (paricchinna)? If it is the lowest criterion, *viz.*, mere appearance or presentation, that determines reality, we are led to the absurd position of identifying the illusory and the real. If, on the other hand, we are not satisfied with anything short of the highest criterion, *viz.*, non-contradiction, we are led to the position of the Vedanta that only the Absolute is real.

The Vedantic Absolute, which is *ekarasa* (perfectly homogeneous) and pure *cit* and has not the many as its content, has been entirely misunderstood in the West and has been taken as an abstraction, a void or a mythical entity. The Being that can be characterised by no content is indistinguishable from nothing and has nothing to commend itself to reason—this is the verdict of the theistic thinkers of the West. But it is just this point, this conception of the pure self absolutely free from all adjuncts, the *nirviśeṣa* and *nirupādhic* Brahman, free from the least touch of materiality and heterogeneity, free from all difference and division, that forms the pivot of the Vedantic system. It explains the identity of the individual and the Absolute, of the Jīva and Brahman and it it is the basis of its doctrine of emancipation. The self as free from all *upādhis* or adjuncts, the *prajñānaghana ātman*, the pure *cit*, the *śuddha cinmātra* or the *cidekarasa*, can

in no way be distinguished from the Absolute which also is pure *cit.*, all spirit and no matter. The *nirupādhic* Ātman and the *nirupādhic* Brahman are identical, simply because the ground of distinction and division, materiality in the form of adjuncts, is absent from both.

The Vedanta is not a mere repetition of the Śruti texts but is a genuine system of philosophy. Rationalisation of experience is the true function of philosophy and almost in every case, a philosophical system is an elaboration and justification of some experience, either sensuous or non-sensuous. The experience precedes and must precede the rationalisation. The Vedanta is no exception to the general rule. It proves with the help of strict logic that the Śruti texts embodying the experience of the adepts are justifiable by reason. The great Adhyāsa Bhāṣya of Saṃkara is an attempt at furnishing the logical basis of the upanishad view that multiplicity is not real, although it appears to be so. The psychology of illusion explains how one thing may have an altogether different appearance, how a rope may falsely appear as a snake. An illusion is an everyday experience, and the Vedanta bases itself on this fact of experience. The fact that multiplicity is experienced is no ground of its ultimate reality, simply because all illusions are experienced facts but not real.

The Vedantist also analyses the state of *suṣupti* or dreamless sleep and shows that the self is here experienced as pure consciousness. His doctrine of the differenceless self is not a mere theory that can be dismissed at the sweet will of the Western critics but is based on the unassailable ground of everyday experience of all. The Vedantic doctrine would have remained a pure myth to all and the criticism of the West would have been justified but for this appeal to experience and the masterly analysis of the state of dreamless sleep. The state of dreamless sleep conclusively proves that there is no multiplicity, no variety, no content, as the westerners put it, and yet there is an undoubted continuity of consciousness. The concrete experience of *suṣupti* absolutely falsifies the charge that the Vedantic Absolute is a false abstraction. As the Vedanta has sought to supply the rational ground of its doctrines in the state of *suṣupti* and as the whole

system lives or dies with the correctness of the analysis, it deserves a full discussion.

At the waking stage (jāgrat), the sense-organs remain active and it is not possible to isolate the pure *cit* or even to ascertain whether there is any such thing as pure consciousness apart from the contribution of the senses. David Hume, for example, says that he is unable to catch any glimpse of the so-called self or pure *cit* apart from the particular modalised states of consciousness. Here, in India, also the Vijñānavādins deny the existence of the permanent self. Really it becomes difficult to accept the Vedantic doctrine of the pure self on the testimony of waking consciousness alone. The state of *samādhi* or the state of full concentration and absorption which is supposed to be a state of pure consciousness in its highest stage, *viz.*, the *nirvikalpa*, is of no avail and cannot be cited as evidence simply because it is not within the reach of the experience of the ordinary man. The Vedantist knows this difficulty full well and even as early as the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad we find a discussion of the states of dream and dreamless sleep and an attempt to justify the conception of the pure self on the basis of the experience of the common man.

In the dream state the sense organs are not active and there is the opportunity of studying the self when it is free from the active turmoil of the senses. There is the story of Ajātaśatru going to a sleeping person and addressing him as '*bṛhaṅ*' '*pāndaravāsa*' and such other secret names of the *Prāṇa*. As the person does not respond even when addressed by the esoteric names of Prāṇa, it is concluded that the Prāṇa is not the master of the body and is not the self which is ever vigilant and which never sleeps and which is all consciousness.

Great importance has been attached to the state of dreamless sleep when all modalised states of consciousness are absent and where the pure consciousness or self rests in its serene composure and shines in its undisturbed glory. The continuity between the experiences before one falls into dreamless sleep and the experiences after one awakes from that sleep proves that there cannot be an absolute void or blank or utter negation in the interval. Consciousness must be supposed to be identically permanent throughout the states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep in order that memory and recog-

nition may be explained satisfactorily. The feeling that a person has after waking from dreamless sleep, *viz.*, that he slept well and did not have any particularised state of consciousness, is the direct evidence of the persistence of the pure consciousness during the state of dreamless sleep. The memory of being in a blissful state and experiencing nothing particular must have to be explained by reference to its original, *viz.*, the experience at the stage of dreamless sleep. That the state of dreamless sleep was a blissful state cannot be a matter of inference, because as nothing is known of the state, premises necessary for inference cannot be formed. Moreover, the freshness that one feels and the energising that one experiences after sound sleep are nothing but faint continuations and lingering traces of the undisturbed serenity of the pure consciousness during the state of dreamless sleep and do indicate that one must have dived deep into an unruffled and bottomless ocean of bliss and energy. As the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad puts it, "The puruṣa rests in the Sat, in Brahman, but as there is still the envelopment of the *avidyā* or nescience, there is no awareness of the merging or resting in the Absolute." It is an unconscious attainment of the pure consciousness as it were. The individual touches the pure consciousness in dreamless sleep but the mind knows it not. The way to the hidden reservoir of energy and the Ocean of Bliss is not shown to him, he is led blindfolded, as it were, to the hidden place and after having been allowed to enjoy the bliss is again carried blindfolded to his waking consciousness, the plane of his normal working. It could not have been possible to establish the existence of the pure self, the nirupādhic indeterminate Absolute, if there had not been this direct evidence of the state of dreamless sleep every day. There is consciousness and yet no particular content at this stage, and if this is the concrete experience of every man every day, is it possible to regard the indeterminate Absolute to be void in the face of this experience?

The Upanishads have described the state of *suṣupti* (dreamless sleep) in such language as is applicable only to mukti or the state of liberation and sometimes a genuine confusion arises as to what exactly has been meant. Is *mukti* or liberation nothing but dreamless sleep and are the Upanishadic

seers to be identified with the lotus-eaters? That *suṣupti* (dreamless sleep) is not *mukti* or liberation has been definitely indicated by the statement that in *suṣupti* there is nescience, there is the covering of dark ignorance, but in liberation or mukti, it is all light, all knowledge, there being no veil or obstruction at all. In *suṣupti* there is absence of all knowledge *na kiñcana veda*, but in *mukti* the *Ātman*, the self which is all knowledge shines in its own light. If the two are thus widely different, it may be asked, where is the possibility of confusion? The possibility of confusion lies, it may be answered, in the similarity of the two states so far as the absence of modalisation or particularisation is concerned. The Pure Self, free from modalisation or particularisation, is realised both in *suṣupti* and *mukti*, in dreamless sleep and in liberation. The analogy of the state of dreamless sleep has been cited in order to show the purity and freedom, the absence of limitation and determination of the Pure Self in the state of *mukti* or liberation. It has been stated in the Chāndogya Upanishad that in the state of *suṣupti* a person attains identification with the *Sat*, the Absolute (satā saumya tadā sampanno bhavati). Even the etymology of the word *svapiti*, the sanskrit term for sleeping, indicates that it then attains the Self, *svam ātmānam apiti apigacchati*. The working of the sense-organs is withdrawn and as all particular states are absent, the self rests in its normal and natural purity at this stage. But it is never to be forgotten that although the Upanishads have indicated in many ways that the self realises its native purity and undisturbed serenity during dreamless sleep, they have also not been slow to point out the wide divergence between *suṣupti* and *mukti*. Liberation consists in conscious identification with the Absolute, the recognition by the surface consciousness of the identity that always exists between the individual and the Absolute. The difference between ignorance and knowledge, between the nescience that binds and the illumination that liberates, lies in the perception of the identity by the illumined and sublimated intellect .In the state of sleep there is nescience and although there is union with the Sat, the Absolute, there is no awareness of this union, *sati sampādya na viduḥ*, no realisation by the surface consciousness of the identity between the empirical and the transcendental

consciousness. As Ānandagiri states in his commentary, *svāpādhikāre svābhāvikatvam avidyāmātrasaṁmiśritatvam*, the natural purity of the self during sleep is covered merely by the presense of the avidyā or nesceince, although it is not disturbed by its elaborate workings and amplifications.

The experiences of the waking state do not confirm the dream experiences. A person dreams that he has become a king and enjoys kingly pleasures as long as the dream lasts, but as soon as he rises from his sleep he finds himself in his old surroundings and realises that the dream experiences are unreal being not in harmony with the stable experiences of his waking life. It cannot be maintained that the experiences of waking life may also be supposed to be unreal on similar grounds, *viz.*, conflict with dream experiences which are perceived to be real so long as the dream lasts, simply because the experiences of waking life have a greater workability and a greater steadiness than the dream experiences. It is not possible to go on in the world accepting the reality of the dream experiences. But from another standpoint both are on the same level and one is as unreal as the other. Neither of the two can be supposed to represent the nature (dharma) of the person having the experiences. What is experienced during sleep is not corroborated by the waking experience and what is experienced in waking hours does not harmonise with the dream experience. The intense pains experienced a moment before are not felt when a person falls asleep. The waking and the dream experiences cancel each other and are to be declared equally unreal from the point of view of the unchanging, ever-abiding Pure Consciousness which remains in the identical undisturbed state during waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. There is just a glimpse, a momentary experience, as it were, of the serenity of the unmodalised Pure Consciousness, of the Transcendental Self during dreamless sleep, and it is because of this fact that the state of dreamless sleep has been of supreme importance to Vedantic epistemology as supplying the analogue in experience of the transcendental vision. It is never to be forgotten, however, that the experience during sleep is an experience in darkness and that the mind and the intellect have not been sublimated or made fit to understand and profit by the experience but have been

rather dulled to sleep and, as such, this dark state of *suṣupti*, however analogous to Pure Consciousness in the matter of absence of particularisation, is not only not identical with the clear and all-luminous stage of the direct realisation (aparokṣānubhūti) of the Pure Self but is farthest removed from it.

The one thing that remains identical amidst differences, the Vedantist argues, must have to be supposed as different from them. The states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep differ from one another and as the self persists through all these differing states, it must be different from them and must transcend them. The differing states cannot be supposed to represent the nature of the self simply because it cannot *have* contradictory attributes, but as these have no other support than the self, these have to be regarded as superimpositions on the self. Herein lies the excellence of the Vedantic system and the difficulty of understanding it lies also here. It has been the puzzle of the western minds even up to this day. They do not understand at all why these states should not plainly be regarded as states of the self, as manifestations and expressions of the self. But the beauty of the logic of the Vedanta lies just here. How can darkness and light both characterise the same reality? If the self is all light, if it is *svyaṁprakāśa*, if it is self-revealing, if it reveals itself and other things, if it depends on nothing else for its revelation, how can it also be supposed to be also all darkness, how can it be supposed to be enveloped by nescience? The only conclusion that seems reasonable is that the self only assumes these states and only seems to meditate and to move (dhyāyatīva lelāvatīva) and does not actually perform these operations. This conception of transcendence is necessary for the satisfaction of reason. Hegel and his followers have attempted to show that the not-self is not alien to the self and that in reality it is only a moment of the self, that it forms part and parcel of the self. But they have stopped there. They have not cared to enquire whether the not-self, the limitation or the negation, if supposed to be an essential and necessary moment in the life of the Absolute, would not interfere with the freedom and absoluteness of the ultimate Reality. If the finite content is an essential ingredient in the life of the Absolute, if the Absolute is not

absolute without the world, if the self and the not-self or the subject and the object are correlatives, if the Infinite is not what it is apart from the finite, if the Absolute becomes a dead abstraction or a blank zero without manifestation in and through the finite, such an Absolute is certainly not the Perfect Freedom, the ultimate Reality, the unconditioned or the Unmoved Mover. As soon as the question of necessity arises, as soon as it is said that the Absolute *must* manifest itself in and through the world, the unconditioned freedom or the absoluteness is gone. The Vedantist realised this difficulty perfectly and hence did not allow any *svagata bheda*, any internal division with moments or parts, in its Absolute. Here the Absolute freely creates, freely assumes, superimposes the world or the finite on itself, which does not touch its essence at all. The world is thus not an expression or a manifestation of the Infinite. How can the finite manifest the nature of the Infinite? If the whole world of finites be taken away or withdrawn, it does not mean any loss or diminution to the Absolute. If the whole of creation (pūrṇa) be subtracted from the Absolute (pūrṇa) the whole remains in tact, *pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇame-vāvaśiṣyate*. This is just to indicate the transcendence of the Infinite, its non-quantitative nature, its non-spatial and non-temporal character. It is no wonder that the westerners should fail to understand this aspect of the Vedantic Absolute and should regard it as nothing but the Void or the Blank. They cannot rise beyond the *Buddhi* (intellect) which is a unity-in-plurality and which lives in and through particulars. If the Absolute is supposed to be actually realising itself through the finite, if the finite is supposed to form the content of the Absolute, the Absolute lives or dies with the finite. The finite is finite not because of its spirit-content but because of what in it is not spirit. Spirit or Pure Consciousness, without the least touch of materiality, is the Absolute; the Absolute assuming a touch of matter or the principle of individuation, appears as the finite. The addition or substraction of the whole world of finitude does not mean any gain or loss, any increase or decrasee on the part of the Absolute. *Buddhi* has a waxing and a waning, an increase and a decrease in its functioning. What is clear to the *Buddhi* at one moment

loses its clarity at another; what was not intelligible a moment before becomes perfectly clear a moment after. This changing nature of the *Buddhi* which is perceived by the Pure Consciousness that remains ever unchanging (kūṭastha) shows that the former cannot be ultimate. The changes must be due to something other than *Buddhi* the influences of which determine its differing states. That these changes are perceived shows that it itself is an object which is apprehended by the ultimate Reality which never becomes the object (grāhya). The falling off and a rising up—these are undeniable facts and the *grāhytva*, the objecthood of *Buddhi*, has got to be accepted on them. And as soon as the objectness of the *Buddhi* is accepted, the existence of the *Ātman* to which the object is presented and which itself never becomes the object, cannot be denied. The existence of the *Ātman*, the divisionless Absolute, which can never be presented as an object because of its very nature (vastusvabhāvāt), cannot be proved more directly. That which reveals the *Buddhi* and its processes cannot be supposed to be revealed by the *Buddhi*. That which is the Eternal Seer or rather Eternal Sight or Light itself, cannot be seen as an object, that which is *Vijñātā* or seer in all relations cannot itself be the object of knowledge for that would imply *kartṛkarmavirodha*, the contradiction involving the identity of the subject and the object.

The whole difference between the Supra-Personal and the Personal, between the Absolutistic and the Theistic systems between Vedantism and Hegelianism, seems to lie in the point as to whether *svagata bheda* or inherent division is supposed to be the characteristic of the ultimate Reality. If the division between the subject and the object, if self-bifurcation into self and the not-self, is inherent in the nature of the Absolute, if the Absolute cannot but express itself in and through the division, if the transcendence of the Absolute lies in supporting the division and maintaining Itself through it, it is Theism. If, on the other hand, it is supposed that division implies a foreign element, that there is no room for even an internal division, a *svagata bheda*, in the Absolute, that foreignnes and heterogeneity, difference and division call for a further explanation and that the ultimate stage is not reached so long as there is the least touch of any heterogeneity

and difference, that all 'why's can stop only when there is no longer any difference calling for an explanation, that if reason can remain silent and unconsciously or sub-consciously acquiesce in an Absolute containing inherently a division and a difference and regard it as ultimate, it is falsifying itself or at least hesitating to take the momentous and the final step, that the Absolute if it is conceived genuinely as Pure spirit and all-consciousness and without the least touch of matter or anything alien to spirit cannot contain difference and division being free from the principle of individuation, then it is Absolutism. It is admitted by both the schools that the finite has its source and substratum in the Absolute and that it has no existence apart from the Absolute. But whereas the theist thinks that there is no other way to save the reality of the finite but to regard it as an expression of the Infinite, the Vedantist as the most thorough-going yet perfectly logical Absolutist regards the finite as free creation, as voluntary superimposition, an *āhārya adhyāsa*, that does not touch the reality of the Infinite, and thus saves the contradiction of the Infinite being supposed to have a finite content, of the finite being equated with the Infinite, of the obliteration of the distinction between a term and its contradictory. If the Absolute is transformed into the finite, if the Timeless gets itself revealed through time, if temporal divisions represent or reveal the Timeless, is it an intelligible or logical supposition? How can the limitations of temporal division *express* or manifest the Timeless? We are not able to form any conception of the Timeless through the concept of time and we are not in the least profited by the declaration that the temporal is a continuity of the Eternal. Does the Eternal cease to be eternal and get itself expressed in the temporal divisions or does it retain its eternity and still become temporal? To remain *really* eternal and to get *actually* expressed as temporal,—is a conception difficult to be swallowed by the intellect. There is perhaps the underlying supposition that what was eternal *becomes* temporal. The category of time is subconsciously or unconsciously introduced even in the conception of the Absolute which is regarded as Timeless. Without some such unconscious introduction of the time-concept it is not possible to conceive how the Eternal is also

temporal, how the temporal forms part and parcel of the Eternal and how the former is an essential content of the latter. The Eternal that has the temporal as its content is not the real Timeless that transcends the category of time but is only the Eternal that carries all temporal divisions in its bosom and is only the Duration that endures and lasts through all time and transcends not time as such but only the individual divisions of time being the aggregate of them all. But as the Vedanta has in mind the Eternal that transcends time altogether, it conceives of the temporal not as the continuation or the expression and manifestation of the Eternal but as only its *appearance* or its shadow that does not represent the original. What is really eternal appears falsely as the temporal. The temporal is the Eternal, no doubt, but only as its false shadow. The simultaneity of the Eternal and the temporal reduces the latter to the status of a false appearance. The Eternal is above time and the temporal divisions do not and cannot touch it. But the temporal also appears. As we cannot conceive of the Eternal changing or undergoing any process of division in time and expressing itself in time, there is no other alternative but to suppose that the temporal is a false appearance and only the Eternal is real. How such an appearance wholly different from the original arises is no more difficult a problem for the Vedanta than it is for the theist attempting to explain the finite as the content of the Infinite. The difficulty is the same in both and the answer is also very much alike. The fact is that the finite appears in the Infinite. While the theist becomes illogical in trying to equate the eternal and the temporal and paying no regard to the accepted meaning of terms, the Vedantist saves himself from logical contradiction while explaining the fact fully by saying that the contradictories are not both real and that the reality of the one reduces the other to a false appearance. If the temporal and the eternal are *simultaneously* presented the Vedantic conclusion is inevitable. If, on the other hand, the Eternal is missed in the temporal or is conceived in some way as virtually identical with the temporal, that is, as gradually unfolding itself through time, if, in other words, the fundamental distinction between what is in time and what is beyond time and the contradiction implied in equating the

two are lost sight of, then only the theistic conclusion may be held. The Vedantist pushes the logical process to the extreme and draws the unavoidable conclusion that follows from it; the theist halts before the momentous step and saves his religious bias at the sacrifice of his logic.

The most important charges that are generally brought against Vedantic Absolutism are: (1) That the Absolute is a bare abstraction; (2) That morality has no place in the system; (3) That there is no conception of social good as distinguished from the good of the individual; (4) That the reality of the world has been explained away; (5) That there is no trace of active mysticism in the system; (6) That the individual is lost in the Absolute and there is, properly speaking, no salvation of the individual.

Although something has been said here and there in defence of the charges, an attempt has not yet been made to present a full reply to them; I think that these charges can no longer be ignored and the time has come to show their utter hollowness to the world. Whether it be Hegel or Erdmann, Edward Caird or Martineau, Dean Inge or Principal Caird, we hear the same thing from them all, and whatever might be their differences in other respects, they are unanimous in their denunciation of the Indian conception of the Absolute. However loud may be the voice of Śaṁkara in declaring that the Absolute is Full and Perfect (pūrṇa) and not the void (Śūnya or the blank) it is of no consequence to the western thinker who is intent on identifying the Vedantic Absolute with the Buddhist void and on characterising all eastern conceptions as dark like the lion's den if not also black. Vedantism is presented as pantheism and mysticism, and the Absolute is supposed to be an abstract unity that swallows up all the differences of the finite. Edward Caird is very clear when he gives us his estimate of mysticism,—and without doubt he has the Indian conception in his mind as the typical representative of the mystical way of thinking—in the following words :—"But the great error of mysticism was just this, that it thought to reach the deepest reality, the absolute truth of things, by the *via negativa*, the way of abstraction and negation; in other words, that it tried to approach the Infinite by turning its back upon the finite, and not by seeking more

thoroughly to understand the finite. Hence the mystics supposed that the highest idea—that which comes closest to the truth of things—must necessarily be that which has least content; and they treated pure being, the simplest of all abstractions, as representing something more real than is to be found in any specific form of existence. To them, this simplest of all thoughts seemed to have a depth of mysterious significance which no other thought could claim; and when they were baffled in the effort to fathom this self-made mystery, they immediately proceeded to explain their failure by the limitations of the human mind, and the unsearchableness of God. In truth, they were seeking the living among the dead. The astronomer who denied the existence of God, bcause he had swept the heavens with his telescope and had not been able to find Him, was a wise man compared with those who supposed that He was hidden in the emptiest of all our ideas, and who blamed the weakness of their mental vision, because they could not find Him there."[1] Caird here makes certain unwarrantable statements. How does he know that the mystic's ultimate Reality is the emptiest of all ideas and the simplest of all abstractions and is what 'has least content'? Does any mystic ever affirm that his ultimate Reality is what Caird thinks it to be? Is it not rather, according to the mystic, the richest of all ideas, the Perfect and the Full that baffles description not because of its emptiness but because of its infinite content? If it is described as not finite, is it because it is less than the finite or is it because it is discerned, as Descartes puts it in his *Meditations*, that 'there is more of reality in the infinite than in the finite substance'? There is certainly the possibility of mistaking the Infinite to be mere blank negation if it is said that it is not the finite, as we find it in the western thinkers: but is not the opposite possibility, *viz.* identifying the infinite with the finite, when it is said that the finite is the expression of the infinite and is its part and parcel, more dangerous as is seen in the case of the left-winged Hegelians? Is not there the possibility, that is, of taking the finite to be the Infinite and of thinking that there cannot be any other Infinite than what is perceived in and through the

[1] *The Evolution of Religion*, pp. 148-49.

finite? Is there not, in other words, the danger of missing the Infinite altogether?

Caird knows that the ultimate Reality cannot be an empty abstration or an indeterminate that is incapable of explaining itself and other things. As the primary and fundamental truth and the most universal of ideas, it must at the same time be the one "which is fullest of meaning and that which indeed is continually fertile of new meanings" and that it is beyond knowledge, it is so not because it is "too vague and general for definite thought but for the opposite reason, that it is inexhaustible". "It hides itself; if at all, not in darkness but in light." "It is the ground on which we stand, the atmosphere which surrounds us, the light by which we see" and "nothing can be really known apart from it." But if, according to Caird, these are the requirements and the characteristics of the ultimate Reality it is not intelligible what prevents Caird from noticing them in the Vedantic Absolute, which is 'all-light and the light of all lights'.[1] which is the knower in all relations[2] and without which nothing can be known, which is beyond all darkness and is of the nature of light,[3] which is the source and sustainer of the universe,[4] which is Kavi[5] the ever fertile source of new deas, which is the supreme Reality,[6] the *Param*, and which is beyond the Indefinite or the *avyakta*?[7] All the characteristics which he mentions are there in the Vedantic Absolute, but still it has to be damned as a pure abstraction. Does the above description show that the Upanishadic seers have before them a blank negation or an empty abstraction?

The only point that has been mentioned by Caird is that the Vedantic Absolute is only a negation of the finite and does not explain the finite. The Vedanta, it is true, holds that the Absolute is not expressed through the finite and that there is no similarity between the Infinite and the finite. If

1 *Kathopanishad.*
2 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad.*
3 *Gītā*, VIII, 9-10.
4 *Brahmasūtras*, I, 2.
5 *Gītā*, VIII, 9.
6 *Gītā*, XIII, 12.
7 *Gītā*, VIII, 20.

the finite is limited (paricchinna) and the Absolute is unlimited (apparichinna), there cannot be a relation of similarity between them and the finite cannot be taken to be an expression of the Absolute. If by explanation of the finite is meant the rising of the finite out of the Infinite, that holds good equally in Theism as well as in Absolutism. In the Vedanta also, the Aboslute is the sole substratum (adhisthāna) of the finite, and the finite has no other source and support than the Absolute. If, on the other hnad, Caird means that the finite is really explained when it is shown to be *necessarily* related to the Infinite and regarded as a real expression of the Infinite and that every other explanation is no explanation, it is a statement that should be subjected to severe scrutiny. If the finite *expresses* or reveals the Infinite, what is the distinction between the finite and the Infinite? Is it a distinction of quantity or magnitude and is the Infinite only the most exalted finite? If no qualitative difference is supposed to exist between the finite and the Infinite, is not this the only supposition which we are led to? If the content of the Infinite be the finite, is not the Infinite a mere summation of finites? There is a logical difficulty in the supposition and hence the Vedanta avoids it. The difference between the Infinite and the finite is felt as soon as there is the genuine realisation of the Infinite, and wherever there is an attempt to obliterate the difference, there arises a suspicion that perhaps there has not been a real dawning of the sense of the Infinite. The unconditionality of the Infinite, the freedom that characterises the Infinite, does not allow its necessary expression through the finite or its dependence on the finite.

It is not understood why the westerners think that the Vedantic explanation is no explanation of the finite. If an illusion is shown to be an illusion, is it not its real explanation? Is there any such rule that a thing is explained only when it is shown be real? The Vedantic explanation is, no doubt, different from that of the western theist, but how can the former be described as no explanation at all? The finite is, according to the Vedanta, the Infinite itself which has assumed a finite form. The finite is not a part, a segment, of the Infinite, and does not form real content of the Infinite. It is only an appearance, an assumption. Finitude is not the true

and ultimate character of things. It is unreal in the sense that it is merely a passing phase of the Infinite, not real becoming but a mere assuming, not an event in the life-history of the Infinite, not a process in time in the eternal Duration that is supposed to be the Infinite by the theists, but is the appearance of change in the changeless, the appearance of temporal happening in what is beyond time altogether, the seeming division in what is indivisible. What logic is there in supposing that the theory which holds that there a *real* division of the indivisible offers an explanation, but the theory which says that as there cannot be division of the indivisible the division must be supposed to be illusory, does not offer any explanation? There is agreement between the two theories so far as both think that the Infinite is at the bottom of the finite, that the Infinite is the source and substratum of the appearance of the finite or symbolically that A is the substratum of B. But according to the western theist B is explained if it is said to be the necessary expression of A, without any logic whatsoever, but it is not explained at all if it be said that as A can never become B, B can only be an illusory appearance, a superimposition on A. The same explanation is there in both. B is explained being referred to A as its substratum. But how do we pass from A to B? How does the Infinite become the finite? If it be said that it is the nature of the Infinite to become the finite, does it fare any better than the supposition that the Infinite likes to appear as the finite? The only difference between the two theories seems to lie in the fact that whereas there is an illogical supposition in the former involving an obliteration of the meaning of the terms, the latter avoids the illogical step. One is fully entitled to support one's own theory and hold that the opponent's theory is wrong or to show that one's own theory is better than all other theories, but it is not intelligible what is meant when it is held that the Vedanta offers *no* explanation of the finite. If one says it is unreal, is it not explaining it as well?

We have to consider what is meant by an abstract universal and whether the vedantic Absolute deserves to be characterised as such. The term 'abstract universal' is generally found to be applied to what is Being merely or indeterminate Being, but not Being in particular. It is supposed to be the

universal that is shorn of all particular attributes and is reached by abstraction from particulars. Everything real and concrete is supposed to be taken away from it and what is left after this denuding process, it is held, is a bare abstraction, a dead form, a mere skeleton. The vedantic Absolute or Spinoza's Substance, it is held, is carefully cleared of all impurities, all limitations, all adjuncts and all determination, but unfortunately the ideal set up by the intellectualists in the closed room of their brains has nothing corresponding to it in reality and is only an empty abstraction that can never be realised in experience. All attributes one after another, are rejected as falling short of the ideal and the absolute reality is sought to be reached by the *via negativa* or the way of negation. But that which remains after everything has been thrown away is not the Absolute that is everything but is really Nothing, the Dead Void or the Blank Negation.

The issue is to be decided here. Is the universal more real than the particular? Is it richer or poorer than the particular? Is there such a universal that contains the particulars? Is the conception of the concrete universal anything new? Are not all universals concrete? The problem is not new even in European philosophy. It is at least as old as Plato. The Sāmkhya Sūtra says—*aviśeṣāt viśeṣārambhaḥ*—The particular arises out of the non-particular. The universal is not an abstraction from particulars, not reached by rejecting the particular attributes of the individuals, not reached *via negativa*. It is the reality that underlies the particulars and is prior and not posterior to the particulars. It is to be reached by rising above the particulars, not by denying them but by transcending them. Plato's Ideas are not generalisations from particulars but are the ultimate Realities, participation in which makes the particular things real. These are not things of the sense and everybody is not competent to perceive them. Hard intellectual discipline is needed to form an idea of these very subtle things. Plato prescribes rigid mathematical training as preliminary discipline to prepare the seekers for the attainment of the vision of truth. Is it a training merely to see Nothing, to have a vision of an empty abstraction, as Edward Caird supposes? Plato's Ideas, the Vedantic Brahman, and Spinoza's Substance are not generalisations from particulars, but are the

very first things from which everything else has come. The theory of creation in the Vedanta clearly explains that all things have their source in Brahman and that there is nothing apart from Brahman. The particular, the individual, the Viśeṣa, cannot have its true explanation in the particular. If the special features constituting the individual or the particular be explained as the effect of particular conditions residing in its cause, then the particularity or the individuality is only pushed one step further and is rather assumed than explained. If what is in the effect was existing in the cause, then the particular is explaining the particular, or rather it is admitting that no explanation can be given and that the variety and the multiplicity found in the universe have to be accepted as self-existent and fundamental. To explain is not to say that a thing is what it appears to be, not to accept it, at its face value, but to refer it to something higher, to subsume it under a wider principle and to show that it is a particular instance of the general that lurks behind it. To seek a particular as the cause of the particular is to accept the crude fact as final and to declare the bankruptcy of reason. Explanation consists in referring the particular (viśeṣa) to the universal (aviśeṣa) out of which it has emerged. The Universal contains all the particulars within it, not in the sense of their summation or aggregation, but as their ground and substratum. The particulars could never have emerged out of the universal, had not these been residing in it, and as the particulars cannot be supposed to have come out of other particulars having the same content, the universal has to be supposed as their ground. The Vaiśesika philosophy in India points out that the particular in one form, instead of explaining the particular in another form, rather obstructs or opposes it. The particular or the individual which has some special characteristics constituting its indiduality cannot help to generate other special characteristics which are at variance with its own features. The gold ear-ring cannot be the cause of the gold necklace, its shape as ear-ring forbids its assuming the shape of the necklace. It is only gold, the lump, the universal that can take any shape and is the cause of all particular appearances. That which is not limited to any particular shape has the capacity to assume any shape it

likes. The scholastic distinction between *universalia ante res* and *universalia post res* seems to have been forgotten by Edward Carid and his supporters. One is either to hold that the particular cannot be explained at all or it has got to be admitted that it can only be explained by the universal. If the universal is prior to the particular, if it is richer than all the particulars taken together, if it is the ground of particulars, if it is reached not by the rejection of the particulars, how can it be supposed to be an empty abstraction? The universal is something that escapes and transcends the sensuous grasp and can only be perceived by the reason. Those who cry aloud for the so-called *concrete* universal really do not perceive the nature of the universal, which is always concrete being the ground of all that emerges as the real, and remain confined to the region of the particular. The *concrete* universal of Hegel and the Hegelians is only a summation of particulars and does not rise above the territory of the particular, and hence when the genuine universal is presented to them, they have no alternative but to dismiss it as only an abstraction. The universal that transcends the limitation of the particular and is the prius of the particular, is to be grasped by the highest flights of reason where it becomes intuitive leaving its discursive nature behind, and it cannot but seem to be blank to those who have not climbed those heights. The conception of the concrete universal shows not only the tendency to over-emphasise the particular but also definite lack of creative imagination which alone can understand the true nature of the universal. In the realm of pure spirit, there is free creativity. There is no determination, no compulsion, no pressure either in one direction or in another, but still the imagination takes a particular line and expresses itself in one particular way. It might have taken other directions as well. But it has chosen a particular line and no reason can be given and no reason is really necessary to explain this particularisation. This realisation in and through a particular actuality where there are innumerable possibles is all that is meant by creativity. So long as there is determination, so long as one particular is determined by another particular, we roam in the sphere of causation and this is the region of matter. But when we rise to the notion of creativity, where nothing is

determined but everything is freely chosen we reach the realm of the spirit. The true universal that is the ground of all particulars is the creative spirit and the Ideas of Plato, the Substance of Spinoza and the Brahman of the Vedanta all belong to this category, and if the question is raised as to whether this universal is concrete or abstract, the conclusion is inevitable that the inquirer is still roaming in the region of matter and has not yet been granted access to the realm of the spirit. So long as the spirit is not realised, the particular is regarded as the cause of the particular, and at this stage if the particular is missed, it seems that all that is real is gone and only an empty abstraction remains. But once the spirit is recognised to be the ground out of which the particulars emerge, the true nature of the universal is perceived and the distinction between the concrete universal and the abstract universal becomes meaningless. The particulars are in the bosom of the universal, not as ready made things that can be counted there as individuals, but in the sense in which the poems are in the poet. There is no relation of succession between the spirit and its creative imagination. The images follow one another in time, and the materials or the details of the process of imagination are all related to one another by way of time. But the relation is entirely different between the transcendental vision of the poet or the creative intuition of the seer, and the poem. There is no time-relation here. The real poem is the intuitive vision of the poet, is what the poet sees or has a glimpse of, or rather what the spirit freely creates in the poet, and not the material object,—the lines that we hear or read—which is very far removed from what the poet sees. The poem should not be regarded as the full manifestation or expression of the vision. All that is expressed and suggested through the poem was, it is true, vividly present *in toto* in the imagination of the poet, but a greater portion of what was conceived there perhaps remained unexpressed owing either to the faintness of the imagination or to the poverty of language in which it was sought to be expressed. In order to understand the beauty of the poem, we have not only to go behind the lines and get hold of the flow of imagination that passed through the mind of the poet when the poem was being thought of, but we have to go

deeper still and try to place ourselves in the poetic mood, in that serene contemplative attitude, in that intuitive vision which is creative. At this stage, the poet and the poem, the seer and the seen, become almost identical. The entire poet is in the poem, in every line, nay, in every word of the poem and the poem is not merely an expression or manifestation of the imagination of the poet. The creativity or the intuitive imagination that is the essence of the poet or what makes him the poet, the real universal that precedes the particular, runs through all the poems equally. The spirit is not transformed or changed into the creative imagination, nor does the creative synthesis transform itself into the images. Here in the spirit, we meet with the real universal, we meet with something that transcends particulars. The creations come out of the spirit, have all their essence in the spirit, owe their everything to the spirit, but the creator does not undergo any change or transformation. The emergence of the particular out of the universal does not affect the latter in any way. This is what is meant by real creativity as distinguished from causation and this is what distinguishes between Matter and Spirit. The nature of the universal cannot be understood at all at any stage short of the free spirit. The relation of the spirit to the states and processes of consciousness is what exactly describes the relation of the universal to the particular. The states of consciousness do emerge out of the spirit, are there in the spirit not as stored up individuals, but as what may come out freely from it. When one is in a state of calm contemplation, in a state of absolute serenity, when one is having no particular modalised state of consciousness but is experiencing a state of absolute peace free from all disturbing influences, is it an experience of abstraction? Is it not rather the experience of the highest that is in man? To regard the universal that is everywhere declared as the source and ground of the particulars to be abstract, is not to recognise that the real universal is only the spirit which can never be an abstraction, as it is the self itself. Those who demand a concrete universal distinct from the universal that is prior to the particular are really seeking the crude particular in the name of the universal and are really nominalists who cannot think of any thing transcending the particular.

The vedantic Absolute is not only no abstraction but is the highest reality, the unity of thought and being. It is not a subjective idea but is prior to the bifurcation into subject and object. The real meaning of the Ontological Argument, which is missed by the western philosophers, is shown by the Vedanta. Kant's objection certainly holds if God or the Absolute is an idea in the mind of the subject. Because a person has an idea of three hundred dollars in his pocket, it does not follow that he has the three hundred dollars. If Descartes's argument be interpreted merely to mean that because we have a clear and distinct idea of God, it cannot but be true, it is impossible to refute Kant's objection. The gap between a subjective idea and objective reality is immense, and no logic can justify the transition from one to the other. If every idea that is thought clearly or every object that is imagined vividly is regarded as real, then the distinction between fiction and reality, between imagination and perception, disappears and this cannot certainly be the meaning of the identity of thought and being. As the names of such great thinkers as St. Anselm, Dsecartes and Hegel are associated with the Ontological Argument, it seems that Kant must have failed to understand the real import of the argument and that he has done great injustice to himself by allowing his mind to think that those great masters of thought could have committed a mistake which even an ordinary man would not do.

So long as the object is different from the subject, the idea is bound to be distant from the fact, and unless there is correspondence between the object and what is in the subject, truth is not attained. It is the correspondence that fills up the gap between the subject and the object. If the idea is an exact copy of the object, it is true; if there is any discrepancy between the idea and the fact, then the idea is false. The correspondence theory of truth recognises, it is true, the wide gap between the idea and the fact, but it is a crude theory which emphasises sense to the neglect of reason. It does not realise that it is not possible to discover the fact as distinct from the idea. It is pointed out that it is not possible to get hold of an extra-mental fact. A fact has got to be known through the mind and as soon as it is

in the mind it becomes an idea. There is no possibility of going outside the mind and catching hold of the fact any more than it is possible to outstrip one's own shadow. There is no way of judging whether the idea corresponds to the fact simply because the so called 'fact' is never available. What is ordinarily meant by a 'fact' is only other people's ideas, and hence the correspondence theory of truth has been discarded by the Idealists and consistency or non-contradiction has been substituted for correspondence. We can only compare one idea with other ideas, and if an idea is found to be not inconsistent with other ideas, it has to be accepted as true. Dreams are not true because they are not consistent with the ideas of waking life. Consistency seems to the idealist to be the only criterion of truth, because being confined to the world of ideas, no other test is available to man. But although consistency is to be ordinarily accepted as the criterion, it is an incomplete and an inadequate criterion. An idea may be found to cohere with a thousand other ideas which are known, but it may be found to be inconsistent with a new idea which was hitherto unknown. An idea which was regarded as true previous to the knowledge of the new idea has to be declared false with the introduction of the latter in the world of knowledge. Thus we find that an idea which is consistent and coheres with other ideas may not be true, and that the gap between a subjective idea and objective reality, between thought and being, cannot be bridged over by either correspondence or coherence. The Ontological Argument speaks of the identity of thought and being and gives us the hint of a stage of knowledge where the identity is securely established. It is not to any and every real that the Ontological Argument applies and surely the existence of the object does not follow from its idea with regard to all reals. It is only in the case of the Absolute that the gap between idea and reality is completely bridged over and there is perfect and complete identity between thought and being. There is a stage of knowledge where we rise to the level of the Absolute which is the prius of the division into the subject and the object. At this stage, there is not an *idea* of the Absolute as distinct from its being, and no distinction can be made between the thought and the being. The separation

between thought and reality holds good in the level of the finite where the bifurcation has already taken place, and has no place in the case of the Absolute which transcends the bifurcation. There is a stage in the level of thought where it is felt that it has become identical with being. The idea has become actual not by corresponding with the fact or by cohering with other ideas, but by bridging over the gulf through meditation and realising the oneness of the subject and the object in an all-inclusive experience. So long as there is an unresolved element, so long as there is the appearance of anything different from the self, so long as anything appears as an object as distinct from the perceiving subject, whether it be in the shape of an external object or even as an idea belonging to the subject, the question of a criterion of truth arises and the transition from thought to existence becomes an unwarrantable assumption. The self or the Absolute of the Vedanta is not the subject that has ideas but is something that transcends the distinction between the subject and the object and is beyond all relational consciousness. The question of the criterion of truth cannot arise here at all, simply because there is at this stage no idea *of which* the truth or falsity has to be determined. The idea is here resolved into the subject and the subject remains not as a bare abstraction apart from the object, as is so often supposed, but the relational consciousness of the bifurcating, discursive intellect is elevated to the higher immediacy of intuitional apprehension. Where the self as subject knows the not-self appearing as the object it is an instance of the one receiving or knowing an 'other'. This otherness gradually thins away as the object approaches nearer and nearer the subject, appearing first as the external object, then as ideas related to the subject, and next, as ideas forming part of the subject itself. But it is only when the idea is completely merged in the subject, or rather, when the subject as the knower and the object as known resolve themselves into the non-relational consciousness, that the otherness becomes completely extinct. At any stage short of this, knowledge implies the grasping or apprehending by the subject of something that is (at least partially) other than itself, and as such implies a process, a movement, depending upon some conditions. The uncondi-

tionality of knowledge alone can supply its own criterion, or more strictly, it is above the requirements of a criterion, inasmuch as it involves the complete annihilation of the 'otherness' of the object and thus also of the very distinction between the subject and the object. So long as the 'given', the object, the *dṛṣya* or the *jaḍa* of the Vedanta cannot be reduced wholly to or incorporated in the *draṣṭṛ* or the ātman, the eternal subject or truly speaking, the self-luminous luminosity or cit, Idealism cannot be maintained as a living faith, and to talk of the identity of thought and being so long as the object appears, though only as a presentation to the cognising subject, is to miss the real significance of the Ontological Argument. Knowledge must, at the last step, be unconditional, must be eternal and absolute, and must depend on nothing else as its further criterion. To ask always and for ever for a criterion of knowledge and truth and not to reach the goal is to declare the impossibility of knowledge and the bankruptcy of the human reason. The Ontological Argument only declares this unconditionality and self-revealing character of all knowledge where thought is identical with being and where the question of the criterion of truth does not arise at all. This is Absolute Experience and not experience *of* the Absolute. At this stage, the experience is full which absorbs everything within itself and leaves no residuum, no unexplained surd, no not-self, no 'other', nothing outside itself. The experience is not felt to be subjective having anything outside it or to be a segment of a wider experience or to have any reference to anything beyond itself, but is realised to be the whole, the perfect and Absolute experience where the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective, the self and the not-self, coincide and give up their distinctness. The distinction between idea and fact, thought and reality, becomes meaningless at this stage, because the segmentation and opposition find no significance in the whole or the Absolute Experience. The Ontological Argument refers to this Absolute where thought cannot be separated from reality, where thought is identical with being, and not to an idea which can be separated or thought of in isolation from reality. An analogy to this highest experience is supplied by the experience of the miniature creator, the

sculptor or the painter. The thought, the imagination, or rather the image before the mind's eye of the artist, has become so vivid and lively that he sees and feels its presence before him as a living reality. It is not an image, a copy of reality to him, but it is for him the original, the reality, of which the marble image or the piece of painting is the copy. If anybody suggests to the artist that after all what he has seen is only an image, a product of his imagination, and not reality, he is sure to be dismissed as an outsider, a layman having no appreciative perception and not deserving of admittance into the mysteries of reality. In the vividness of the imagination of the artist, the idea has attained actuality, and the distinction between idea and fact has been transcended. The idea has become creative and is the source of reality. The creative idea from which a 'real' emerges and the mere idea which is the copy of a real are realms asunder. The idea which is only the copy of an external reality and is a state in the mind of the subject, is much less real than the object. But the creative idea that is the source of the external object,—the marble image or the piece of painting in the case of the miniature creator and the whole of the universe in the case of God—is much more real than the real object in the world. The so-called real object is only the external manifestation of the creative idea, a very faint copy or an image of the real that is in the mind of the creator. But it is always to be kept in mind that the analogy is only an analogy and is not to be taken as showing similarity in all respects between the Absolute and the miniature creator. It is the fulness of the imagination, its vividness and vivacity, its intensity and depth, that takes the thought to its creative level where the separation of idea and fact has not yet taken place. The Absolute that the Ontological Argument of the Vedānta seeks to establish is not an empty abstraction, not a blank negation, not what rejects all particulars, not what is devoid of all particulars, but is the creative thought that is the source of all particulars and, as cerative, is the identity of thought and being. The Absolute of the Vedānta is the most concrete of concretes, the most real, the prototype and fountain-head of all that is taken to be real, that carries and holds in its bosom whatever there is and can

be in the universe. The theory of creation in the Vedānta tells us that the whole of the universe issues out of the Absolute, and even in spite of this, if it is supposed to be the lion's den from which nothing comes, it is nothing but giving the dog a bad name in order to hang him. It is very difficult no doubt to conceive in thought of a state which is above all duality and division including even the division into the subject and the object, nay, it seems almost impossible to realise the undifferenced Absolute, but it is also clear that to seek a *concrete* universal beyond the Absolute that is the source of all particulars and is behind them all, is to recognise the reality of nothing above the sense-level. The universal that is dependent on the particulars or that *must* have the particulars as its content, is not really universal but is only the aggregate of particulars. The mind that is apprehensive of missing the particulars in the genuine universal has very likely not risen above the region of the particular and has not seen the beauty of the univesral that transcends the particulars. The concentration, the abstraction, the discipline that is needed to apprehend the real universal is not there, and the mind finds itself in utter darkness when the particulars are left out. This is why Plato recommended twelve years' discipline in mathematics for preparing the mind to perceive realities that transcend particulars. The mathematical formulae are not intelligible to those who cannot rise above the level of sense-perception; they are abstractions, no doubt, but not empty abstractions; they do not contain, it is true, sense-particulars but they are not blank negations. It is no wonder that the Absolute of the Vedānta and the Ideas of Plato which are much more general than mathematical principles should appear to be unreal abstractions to those who cannot find reality in anything beyond sense-particulars.

It is to be clearly understood that the Vedantic system is not mysticism and its method is not the negative method of exclusion. The vedantic Absolute is not reached *via negativa* and is not realised in a mystic trance. The highest state of knowledge is not a state of withdrawal or a state of absorption, as it is in the case of *yoga-samādhi* of Patañjali, (which even is reached step by step and is not like mystic trance). The great difference that exists between the *laya-samādhi* of

Patañjali and the *bādha-samādhi* of the Vedantist should be clearly recognised. In the *laya-samādhi*, there is withdrawal from the things of the universe and there is sinking into the depths of the self. There is no attempt to reduce the object to or absorb the not-self into the self. The not-self or the object remains outside the self as a real, and the self which is realised is merely the subject in its purity, undefiled by any influence coming from the object or by attachment and repulsion surging from within. The *bādha-samādhi* of the Vedānta is something entirely different and is, properly speaking, not at all like what is ordinarily understood by *samādhi*. The not-self, here, is not an ignored or rejected real but is a realised unreal. The not-self is not left behind, not what is not taken into account, not something from which consciousness withdraws into itself, not something to which the eyes are closed, but is *perceived* to be false, to be unreal. The not-self is not left as an unexplained surd but it is found to be fully explained in the self and is perceived to have no reality apart from the self. Its not being the self, its reality, that is, as not-self, is perceived to be a false appearance, to be an illusion. It is the very self, the Absolute itself that pervades everywhere, that is all-encompassing and infinite that is underlying the so-called not-self and appears as the not-self. The realisation of the infinite self, the perception of the all-pervading Absolute, cannot but reduce the appearance of the not-self, of the limited and the finite, to be false. When the Infinite shines in its own glory, is not the finite also realised to be really infinite and is not its finitude perceived to be false, to be a mere appearance, a mere assumption, the unreal shadow of what is really infinite? A simultaneous presentation of the Infinite and the finite establishes the *pāramārthikatva*, the absolute reality of the former and the *mithyātva* or the unreality of the latter. This is what the Vedānta seeks to teach by its doctrine of the unreality of the universe. The Vedantist Jñāni has not only the vision of the Absolute like the mystic, but also perceives the unreality of the universe along with it, unlike the mystic. The falsity or the unreality of the finite is presented simultaneously with the realisation of the Absolute. The world, that is, the finite, becomes *bādhita* (contradicted) in the Infinite, and as the finite cannot

hold itself in the presence of the Infinite, it reduces itself to an appearance of the Infinite and becomes wholly absorbed in it. It becomes the Infinite itself, or more strictly speaking, it realises its infinitude. It is to be clearly understood that the finitude, the segmentation or the limitation, only is perceived to be unreal, it being incompatible with the Infinite. The Infinite cannot also be finite; if there is the appearance of the finite it must be illusory. The Infinite must have assumed a finite appearance. The finite does not reveal the Infinite, does not show the Infinite as it is. It rather conceals the true nature of the Infinite. Hence it is to be regarded as an illusion, as an appearance that does not show the true character of the substratum but shows it differently. It does not matter much whether the finite is regarded as real or unreal so long as its true character is recognised. There is no objection if it is regarded as real because of its being grounded in the Infinite. In that sense even an illusion is real being grounded in the real substance. If, however, it is felt that it shows the Infinite to be different from what it really is, it has to be regarded as false, as an unreal appearance. Everything is real in the sense that it is nothing but Brahman, nothing but the Absoute. It is the Absolute that has appeared in all forms and has taken all shapes. This is never denied by the Vedānta and it is an entire misunderstanding of the system if it is supposed to hold that the Absolute excludes all names and forms or that names and forms fall outside the Absolute. It would have been suicidal to the Vedānta if it had really held any such view. The Absolute that excludes anything, that leaves anything outside its scope, can never be absolute, can never be the *ekamevādvitīyam*, the One without a second, the unconditional Reality that meets with no resistance anywhere, the *abhayam*, the perfect freedom. The *dvaita*, the duality has to be realised as unreal (mithyā) before there can be the perception of the *advaitam Brahman*, the divisionless Absolute. The Absolute that is the synthesis of all oppositions and the reconciliation of all contradictions and is the Perfect Harmony (nirdoṣam samam), cannot itself be a member of the opposition. Those who think that the Vedānta preaches a static Brahman or a silent Absolute as against the changing universe, a motionless, changeless Peace

as against movement, change, and disturbance, forget that the Vedantic Absolute is above the opposition of staticity and dynamicity, above the opposition of silence and movement. The silence that opposes istelf to movement, the peace that is disturbed by action, is not the supreme silence that the Vedanta speaks of, is not the Transcendent Harmony that the Vedānta seeks to give hint to. The Perfect Equilibrium that is the same in motion as well as in rest, that is not the least disturbed by motion nor heightened a jot in silence, that knows no increase or decrease, that is untouched by any circumstance or happening, is the Absolute of the Vedanta that genuinely transcends all opposition. It is not combining motion with rest, silence with dynamis, not aggregating both sides of the opposition, which is simply a contradiction in terms taken at the face value—but the realisation of a supreme Harmony which transcends the opposition of motion and rest altogether. Motion and rest belong to a lower category where opposition reigns supreme and where each term gains its meaning only in contrast with its other. The Vedānta, on the other hand, has attempted to speak of a higher category where the opposition of motion and rest loses all meaning, where other terms and expressions are to be requisitioned to describe the state of things. It is a transcendence of category, not transcendence by aggregation. It is not motion and rest together, but it is something higher than motion and rest, something which is not describable by terms in opposition. It is not a combination of disharmonious things but a harmony that reconciles all disharmony. It is the supreme Bliss beyond the opposition of misery and happiness, the Supreme Peace beyond the opposition of silence and dynamis, the Absolute Perfection that is beyond good and evil, the transcendent unity that is beyond being and becoming. It is an indivisible and unending state of consciousness that knows no sleeping or awakening, an infinite bliss that is not broken either by pleasure or by pain, a persistence or a continuity that knows neither increase nor decrease, neither disease nor decay, neither destruction nor death. When opposite characters are sought to be ascribed to it in the expression "It moves and it moves not", what is meant is that it is beyond opposition and not that it is an aggregate of opposites.

From what has been said above it ought to be clear that the individual does not lose himself when he attains liberation. The knowledge that gains liberation for the individual is the recognition that the individual is the Absolute. The limitation that is responsible for the bondage is gone, and liberation results simply because the individual perceives that he is not under any limitation and recognises his identity with the Absolute. There is full consciousness of the identity, or more strictly speaking, absolute consciousness permeates the entire being of the individual. The state of liberation is not a state of unconsciousness, not a state of darkness, not a state of undefined, indistinct and hazy consciousness, but the highest state of consciousness which the individual can have and has ever known. If the individual rises to the state of the Absolute and feels his identity with the Absolute and realises and becomes Absolute consciousness, is it losing his self in any way? Is it not, on the other hand, gaining the highest expansion that is possible, is it not gaining his real self, is it not finding his true nature? It is true that the individuality is lost in the sense that it is no longer possible to identify oneself with the limiting adjuncts constituting the individual. But it is just what emancipation implies. If the individual is still to feel his individuality, that is, if he still wants to be identified with the adjuncts that limit him and give to him his individuality, he is demanding something impossible. There cannot be freedom and resistance, emancipation and bondage together. If a person is to realise his identity with the Absolute, if he is to experience absolute consciousness, or rather, if there is the working of absolute consciousness in him, he cannot but feel that he is not in fetters and that there is nothing that can resist him, and he is bound to regard his finiteness or individuality to be an illusion. If bondage is constituted of the feeling of finitude, and if individuality means the consciousness of the finite as such, it is clear that liberation cannot allow individuality or the feeling of finitude to continue to persist along with it. The individual does not perish but gains eternal life and immortality: it is only his individuality, that is, his finitude that perishes and must perish.[1] The Vedānta thinks that

[1] Śaṁkara's Commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, I, iv, 22.

finitude is unreal, and hence it is not a perishing or a destruction that may have its rise again, but it is eternally negated (nitya asiddha), never to appear again as real. It is the limiting adjuncts that hinder the realisation of the Divine, it is the finitude that shows the distance from the Infinite, and so long as the limitation is not removed there is no possibility of the realisation of the Absolute. An attachment to individuality, a clinging to the narrowness represented by it, is detrimental to the gaining of the expanded vision and the wide outlook which liberation implies. The horror of the loss of individuality when the Absolute is gained only shows that the Absolute has not been understood in its true nature and that it has been supposed not to be the home and ground, the support and sustenance, the beginning and end, the alpha and omega of all particulars, but as mere blank negation. Those who are horrified at the thought of dissolution in the Absolute do not see beyond the particulars, do not see the universal that is the prius of the particulars and are still attached to the particular. The universal that is prior to the appearance of the particular is very hard to realise because of its extreme sublety (sukshmatvāt tadavijneyam). It can be realised only by the pointed intellect (dṛśyate tvagryayā buddhyā) which has been freed from all impurities in the shape of attachment (rāga) and repulsion (dveṣa). The Vedantist anticipated perhaps the failure of the unprepared mind to understand the very subtle reality and hence prescribed a rigid preparatory discipline for the seeker of the Absolute Truth. None who had not acquired the proper equipment, none who had passed through the hard struggle, was allowed even to listen to the scriptures dealing with the Absolute Reality (Brahman). The seers, the Rishis, knew that the Absolute raised above and dissociated from the particulars would be misunderstood and misinterpreted by the ordinary mind and hence took necessary precautions. The inevitable has happened as a result of utter disregard of their salutary advice and we can only now repent for having neglected their superior wisdom.

It is perhaps a mistaken notion of the westerners that the Vedantic liberation also happens after death, as it is the case with other religions, and this is perhaps the reason why

they are so anxious to learn what happens to the individual when he attains liberation. The question that troubles them most is: If the Absolute only remains and there is no trace of individuality in the Absolute, how can it be regarded as liberation *for* the individual? If the individual is gone and gone for ever, it is neither bondage nor liberation for him, it is nothing to him at all, simply because he is no longer there. It may be of some consolation to the western scholar to learn that the Vedanta speaks of liberation of the individual not after his death but even while he is living, while he is holding his bodily frame in flesh and blood. The distinction between Jīvanmukti and Videhamukti, liberation while one is living and holding the body and liberation while one has given up one's body, is of no importance in the Vedanta. Not only one is as good as the other and there is absolutely no difference in quality between the two, but it is of no consequence to the Vedanta whether the body persists or goes. The question of the perishing of the individual cannot arise in the case of the Jīvanmukta who is seen by all men not only to be living but also as performing all actions with his body. Everything of the individual may be seen to be persisting and still nothing that constitutes the individuality of the individual may remain. The individual is no longer ego-centred but God-centred. His actions do not proceed from egoistic considerations or from the individual as centre, but the universal centre is working in him. The liberated person does not identify his self with his body, that is, with the material or the individuating principle. It is touch with matter that individuates, that particularises, that introduces segmentation or division into the divisionless consciousness. Whether it be the gross body or the subtle body or the causal body, there is an alien element, a not-self or what is not pure consciousness. Liberation means the overcoming or getting rid of the identification of the self with the body or the not-self in any form whatsoever. "The pleasant and the painful do not touch the person who has become devoid of the body, that is, who has transcended his body-consciousness and has ceased to identify himself with his body", says the Śruti. Liberation, in the Vedanta is not an unknown and unknowable thing lying in the midst of the darkness of death and its

misty surroundings, but a definite experience and realisation here on this earth. The individual experiences the absolute consciousness, is raised to the level of the Absolute and works at that level, and finds that the universal centre is identical with his individual centre and that it had always been working in him unrecognised in the guise of the individual centre. Liberation is nothing but growing to a fuller consciousness, rising to a more expanded vision, passing to a state of adequate knowledge. It is identical with perfect knowledge and dispels only ignorance or inadequate conceptions. Knowledge and ignorance cannot live together. If the truth is that the self is unlimited and infinite, it cannot also be true that the self is limited and finite. The conception that the self is finite and individual must have to yield in the presence of the revelation of its infinitude. The demand for the retention of individuality even in the state of liberation is nothing short of the demand for a limited or a finite Infinite, which is a contradiction in terms. The realisation of the self as Infinite cannot but reduce the previous conception of the self as finite to be false. There is no destruction or annihilation, no annulment or cancellation, no rejection or denial, but there is transcendence, which is as much an absorption as a rejection, as much an affirmation as a negation. The lower conception or category is transcended by the higher category, which contains the lower in one sense and negates it in another sense. If the higher does not contain the lower, if it does not absorb the lower and is merely in opposition to the lower, it forfeits its right to be recognised as the higher: it must contain all that there is in the lower and also something more in order to deserve the title. Again, if it has to establish its superior claims, it must point out where and how the lower category falls short. This simultaneous affirmation and rejection constitute the character of true transcendence. Vedantic liberation is the transcendent category which affirms as well as denies the individual. It is rising to the superior point of view from which the individual finds its full affirmation in the Absolute while at the same time it realises that its individuality, its *separateness* from the Absolute is false.

The Vedanta holds definitely that the body-consciousness or the identification of the self with the body is false. Saṁkara

says, "If it be held that one becomes devoid of the body, that is, of the body-consciousness only when one is dead and that it cannot happen so long as one is living, we say, no, that is not the case; because the body-consciousness owes its origin to ignorance."[1] Vācaspati Misra, in his commentary on this passage, says clearly, "If the body consciousness had been real, it would not have disappeared during the life-time of the individual; but, as it is due to false ignorance, it is possible to eliminate it through right knowledge."[2] There is no bar to the elimination by knowledge of something which owes its origin to ignorance. It is only natural that the liberated jñānī (wise man) on the attainment of knowledge should get rid of his sense of identification with the body which has its support only in ignorance. It is also to be noted that this is not a new idea introduced into the original philosophy of the Upanishads by Śaṁkara and his followers as is so often supposed. In support of his statement Śaṁkara quotes two famous mantras of the Upanishads, "Tad yathā ahinirlayanī valmike mṛtā pratyastā śayītaivamevedaṁ śarīraṁ śete. Atha ayaṁ aśarīro amṛtaḥ prāṇo brahmaiva teja eveti" and sacakṣuracakṣuriva sakarno akarna iva savāgavāgiva samanā amanā iva saprāno aprāṇa iva." "As the forsaken skin of the snake lies hidden in the ant-hill so also the body of the liberated jnānī remains like that. After attaining knowledge he becomes non-body, non-mortal, non-life and exists as Brahman and as Energy." "Although possessing eyes he becomes like one without eyes, although possessing ears, he becomes as if he is without ears, although poscessing speech, be becomes as if he is without speech, although possessing mind, he becomes like one without mind, and although possessing life and breath, he becomes as if he is without life and breath." These passages clearly indicate that in the liberated state when one attains the Brāhmic consciousness, that is, when one resides in Brahman and becomes one with the Absolute, one is not in utter darkness and is not annihilated, but is in transcendent consciousness and becomes identical with All Energy (teja).

[1] Commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, I, i, 4.

[2] *Bhāmatī*, I, i, 4.

The Vedanta says clearly that Brahman is stated in two ways in the Śruti. Sometimes it is spoken of as devoid of all adjuncts, as attributeless (nirguṇa) and at other times it is described as having attributes (saguṇa) and as associated with all names and forms. "*Dvirupaṁ hi brahmāvagamyate, nāmarūpavikārabhedopādhiviśiṣṭaṁ, tadviparītanca sarvopādhi-vivarjitam.*"[1] It is to be noted carefully that it is one and the same identical Brahman, the Absolute Reality, that is described in these two diverse ways. It is not true that the Vedanta speaks of nirguṇa Brahma, of the attributeless Absolute, as a distinct Reality other than the saguṇa Brahman or the Personal God with attributes. It is the same Reality that is sometimes described as *nirguṇa* and at other times as *saguṇa*, according as it is shown in its real nature as dissociated from adjuncts (upādhi) or as being associated with adjuncts in the shape of names and forms. "The Absolute Reality creates all forms and after having endowed them with their names enters into them and resides in them." This is a description of the Saguṇa Brahman and in this aspect He is worshipped as the Supreme God who is the cause of all things and is *sarvakarmā sarvakāmaḥ sarvagandhaḥ sarvarasaḥ*, is the doer of every thing, is the seat of all desires, and in him dwell all smells and all tastes. When, however, the transcendental nature of the Absloute is referred to where there is absence of all differences, the description runs as follows: "He is *asavdam* (soundless), *asparśam* (touchless), *arūpam* (formless), and *avyayam* (endless)." The Upanishads referring to both of these aspects and showing clearly that both are aspects of the same reality cannot be supposed to be confined to only one of them. It is definitely stated that the Absolute voluntarily and of His own freewill assumes names and forms in order to show favour to the aspirant (sādhaka).[2] The names and forms are not different from the Absolute and have no existence apart from the Absolute. The changes, the transformations (vikāra) are non-different (ananya) from the Absolute, and hence there is no contradiction in supposing

[1] Śaṁkara's Commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, I, i, 11.

[2] *parameśwarasya api icchāvaśāt māyāmayam rūpam sadhakānugrahārtham. Ibid.*, I, i, 20.

that the Absolute assumes the changes and becomes all smell, all taste. The Lord Himself says, "The form that you see has been created by me, by my magical power; otherwise you would not have been able to see me adorned with these qualities." It cannot be said that the scriptures speaking of the creation of names and forms by Brahman are not trustworthy [1], because it is not a stray passage here and there inconsistent with the main teaching of the Upanishads, but it forms the central doctrine of the Vedanta. The names and forms are not other than Brahman; these come out of Brahman and have been created by Brahman, and Brahman has entered into them. Unless this point is understood clearly, the spirit of the teaching of the Upanishads cannot be grasped at all. There is not only no inconsistency in Brahman being both Saguṇa and Nirguṇa, both with attributes and without attributes, but the Brahman that is *nirguṇa* only and not *saguṇa* or *saguṇa* only and not *nirguṇa*, is definitely not the Absolute of the Vedanta. Vācaspati Misra, the commentator of Śaṁkara's Bhāṣya, states unambiguously, "*tasmāt rupavattam api paramātmani upapadyate*."[1] "Therefore, the assumption of forms is consistent with the nature of the Absolute." As Brahman is the sole cause of the universe, the identical material and efficient cause (abhinnanimittopādāna), and as the effect is non-different from the cause, it is only proper that Brahman should be identified with the All of the universe. If this identity between the cause and the effect, between Brahman and the world, is not perceived, the realisation of the Vedantic Absolute becomes an empty dream. If Brahman is missed in any infinitesimal thing of this universe, that tiniest thing would form an ' other ' to It and would falsify the unqualified and absolute monism of the Vedanta. It must have been an evil day for the Vedanta when its modern interpreters, unacquainted with the true meaning of the texts have preached to the world that the Vedantic Brahman is nirguṇa and *not* saguṇa, is static and not dynamic, is the changeless and not the changing, is one member of the opposition and not the transcendent Absolute that reconciles all opposition. Śaṁkara never says any such thing

[1] *Bhāmatī*, I. i. 20.

nor do his followers support any such interpretation. Śaṁkara definitely says, "ekemapi brahma apekṣitopādhisamvandham nirastopadhisamvandhanca upāsyatvena jneyatvena ca vedānteṣu upadiśyate." The very same Brahman has been taught in the Upanishads as the object of worship being associated or related with adjuncts, and also as the object of supreme knowledge being shown as not related to any adjunct at all. Full knowledge demands that Brahman should be realised not only as related to adjuncts but also transcendentally as not related to anything at all, not only that the attributes are not adjectives but only adjuncts not inherent in the nature of Brahman but only externally and superficially associated with It, but also that the adjuncts even are not different from It but are Its own creation. Like every other system, the Vedanta also holds that the Absolute creates the world, but its special mission seems to lie in pointing out clearly the distinction between creation and causation, between the free working, the spontaneous assuming, on the one hand, and the necessary manifestation, on the other. If the finite is the *necessary* manifestation of the Infinite, if the Infinite cannot but express itself through the finite, it is causal necessity and not free creation. If, on the other hand, the finite is what the Infinite freely assumes, if it does not touch the Infinite, if it is not part and parcel of the Infinite, if the Infinite is not poorer by the subtraction of the finite from it or even richer by the addition of the finite into it, then only it is 'creation' in the proper sense of the term.

There is a famous passage in Śaṁkara's commentary on the Brahmasūtras which seems to indicate the whole truth in the matter [1] "*Yadyapi eka eva ātmā sarvabhuteṣu sthāvara-jangameṣu gudha tathāpi cittopādhiviśeṣatāratamyāt ātmanaḥ kuṭasthanityasya ekarupasyāpi uttarottaram āviskṛtasya tāratamyaiśvaryasaktiviseṣaiḥ śruyate.*" "Although it is the one self that resides hidden in all beings and things of the universe moving and non-moving, still because of the differences, the excellence or otherwise, of the mind in which the reflection or the revelation takes place gradually, the eternal, unchanging,

[1] I, i, 12.

homogeneous and self-same reality itself appears differently as possessing different grades and degrees of power and energy." The difference is not in the reality that is realised which is verily the same everywhere. It is due to the differences in the equipment of all minds that perceive it. According as the mind becomes purer and purer, it reveals more and more of the Absolute. The same Reality appears to belong to different orders because of the richer and richer experiences of the mind reaching its deeper and deeper levels. The same Reality that appears to the devotee to be confined or restricted to a particular form may very well reveal itself to be possessing other forms and also to be transcending all forms. Perhaps this is what happened in the case of the great devotee. Rāmprasad, when he sang "I to-day realise that the vedas are true a thousand times, and that my Tārā (the Goddess whom he worshipped) is Formless." This is what the Vedanta demands—the realisation that the Formless and the Reality appearing in forms are one and the same.

A very serious charge is brought against the Vedanta when it is held by the western scholars that it leaves no scope for morality and that it inculcates a religion without morality. The Vedantic Absolute, it is pointed out, is placed above all duality and division, above all opposition and struggle, above the distinction between good and evil, and as such, can have no preference for the good over the evil. Not only the Absolute is above good and evil but those who think that they have realised the Absolute override the distinction between good and evil and openly proclaim that they are not under any obligation to observe the code of morality. The westerners think that the Vedanta presents an instance of the most debasing type of pantheism, which by doing away with morality and permitting all sorts of actions, has done the greatest harm to the cause of religion. One of the main arguments for preferring theism to pantheism that are put forward by the theologians of the West is the neglect of morality that follows as a matter of course from the pantheistic doctrine. It is to be remembered that Vedantism is not pantheism as it is ordinarily supposed to be and the charge that is levelled against the Vedanta on this score is entirely baseless.

In his commentary on the Brahmasūtras,[1] Śaṁkara distinctly says that before true knowledge (tattvajñāna) is attained, all actions have to be performed scrupulously and moral distinctions have their full value. The moral discipline that is enjoined before one can be allowed even to listen to the Upanishadic texts is rigid and severe and is in no case excused. Moral preparation is essential, and perfect control, both inward and outward *śama* and *dama*, must be acquired before one qualifies oneself for Vedantic discipline. It is a wrong notion to suppose that because the Vedanta speaks of a stage that transcends moral distinctions, it places no importance on morality even before that stage is reached. The Yoga-vaśiṣṭha describes the two stages clearly when it first says, "The stream of desires flows along two courses, good and bad; through strong efforts, it *should* be directed along the good course. When the mind is bent upon evil desires, o thou, the mightiest of the heroes, you *should* divert it to good and holy ones through effort of will", and then, "when you have realised the Truth and have become rid of impurities and anxieties, you have to give up even the host of good desires, you, who have to rise above all desires, whether good or bad."

The difficulty of the westerner is perhaps not so much in understanding the stage of preparation where moral excellence is strongly emphasised, and where constant meditation of holy thoughts and constant performance of holy deeds, purity of both mind and body are urged to be absolutely essential, as in appreciating the stage of transcendence, where the moral kingdom passes on and gives place to the spiritual realm. Śaṁkara definitely states that there is a stage where the feeling of obligation, the sense of duty, the binding force of the 'ought', the compulsion and the constraint accompanying the moral command, seem to have no significance. The struggle that characterises the moral life, the conflict between inclination and duty, seems to be over and the gap between the actual and the ideal is healed. "*Alankāro hyayamasmākam yad brahmātmāvagatau satyām sarvakartavyatāhāniḥ.*" "It is an ornament to us that after the

[1] III, iv, 26.

realisation of the oneness of Brahman and the self, the sense of duty disappears." The Uttara Gīta also states clearly that "For the Yogin who has attained consummation by drinking the nectar of knowledge and has gained the *summum bonum*, there is nothing which ought to be done, and if any oughtness remains certainly he has not attained knowledge." These passages clearly indicate that there is a stage where moral distinctions lose their significance and also that this stage comes after the realisation of the Highest. A confusion between the transcendental and the empirical, between the noumenal and the phenomenal, has been the source of much misunderstanding of the Vedantic doctrine. It is in the empirical order of things that duality and distinction have value, and morality is of supreme importance here. But in the transcendental realm, where the Absolute is perceived to be the sole reality, moral distinctions, like all other distinctions based upon a partial standpoint, can have no meaning. The 'ought' implies an agent and action; but unless there is the imposition of self-hood on the body and the senses, there cannot be any action (pravṛtti). The pure unattached self, the *asaṅga ātman*, can perform no action coming out of any desire which involves identification of the self with something other than the self. The realm of desires and desire-begotten actions is absolutely transcended by the Pure Self, and as such the 'ought' or the 'should' which has reference to motived actions alone can have no meaning or application to the movements (vyāpāra) of the Jñānin. Kant comes very near the stage when he says, "No imperatives hold for the Divine Will, or in general for a holy will; 'ought' is here out of place, because the volition is already of itself in unison with the law." [1] Kant is here definitely hinting at the stage where ethics passes its own boundaries and enters into the kingdom of religion, where the conflict and the struggle have ceased, where the 'ought' has become 'out of place'. The holy will does not act in opposition to the moral law, does not act immorally or arbitrarily, as is supposed by the western critic, but in perfect unison with the law, as Kant supposes. The continuous performance of good actions has created in the jñānin, during the

[1] *Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 31 (Watson's Selections).

preparatory period, a fixed habit of taking always the noble his nature.[1] It is not that he ceases to perform good actions, but that his movements cannot strictly be termed actions (karma or pravṛtti) at all, as these do not proceed from desires, and the distinction between the good and the bad which has its basis in a partial standpoint ceases to have any meaning from the standpoint of his absolute knowledge. He does not choose the good in distinction from the bad. He may continue to perform actions which are supposed by other persons to be good, but for him the distinction between the good and the evil has ceased to be of absolute significance. The Absolute is as much the ground of evil as it is of the good, and as the *jñānin* lives in the absolute consciousness, he cannot have also the partial standpoint that sees an absolute distinction between the good and the evil. Just as there is no loss of individuality in the residing in the Absolute, there is also no loss when the moral standpoint gives place to the spiritual, when instead of seeing good only in some things, one finds good everywhere and realises the kingdom of God securely established. The Vedantic conception only broadens the vision and shows the Absolute to be really infinite and all-pervading and not limited to particular aspects. Śaṁkara's Brahman is not merely the possessor of good attributes (kalyāṇaguṇa), as God is supposed to be by Theism, but is the ground and substratum of everything, the so-called good and the bad, and as it excludes nothing it is certainly not less than the Personal God of Theism. The cry ' morality is gone ' is on a par with the other, *viz.*, ' individuality is lost ', and both are based on the same misconception of the nature of the Vedantic Absolute. If morality no longer finds its scope, if the moral distinctions are found to be inapplicable, it is because the goal of morality has been reached, it is because the kingdom for which the fight was undertaken has been won. If morality preaches love and charity, sympathy and fellow-feeling, goodness and benevolence, it has found its culmination and consummation in the realisation of the spirit. The

[1] Sureswara's *Naiskarmyasiddhi*, IV, 69.

same absolute Spirit that is seen to reside equally everywhere shows the basis and foundation of the moral virtues and obliterates all distinction between things and things or between beings and beings. Morality gains an immense expansion and in the fulness of the Absolute Experience becomes absorbed in it. Just as the individual becomes the Absolute, or rather recognises himself to be the Absolute in the fulness of knowledge, so also the love for the neighbour or the mercy for the poor is found to be God's love for Himself, and morality finds itself fulfilled in religion, where nothing is bad but everything is good being manifestation of the all-pervading Absolute. Morality is bound to become false, bound to appear as a partial standpoint that cannot explain the whole, when the Absolute reveals itself in its full glory. The Vedantic meaning of falsity and the Vedantic category of transcendence should be fully understood. When it is said that morality is transcended it means merely that morality is perceived to be an inadequate and partial category that is inapplicable to the Absolute. It is the same whether we say that morality is fulfilled or absorbed in religion or that it is transcended or falsified. The meaning is that it is perceived to be inadequate and partial in the light of the Absolute. To attempt to retain morality even when the Absolute has been realised is to demand the limited and the unlimited, the partial and the full knowledge together. When christianity asks men to love the sinner, it has transcended morality to some extent; but if it still asks them to hate sin, it is only an evidence that duality has not been overcome completely and the kingdom of the spirit has not been established.

After what has been said above, it seems superfluous to refute the charge that the Vedanta aims at liberation of the individual and has not the good of the society as its end. There cannot be a greater misrepresentation of the Vedantic teaching than to hold that it distinguishes between individual good and social good, and that it perfers the former to the latter. We have so long engaged ourselves in showing that the individual is not lost in the Absolute but gains his full meaning and significance in the Absolute, but now we have before us the opposite charge, *viz.*, that

the individual is the main concern of the Vedantic system. It surpasses one's understanding to realise how these two diametrically opposite charges could be levelled by the same set of critics against one and the same system. If the Vedanta preaches extinction of the individual how can it be supposed at the same time to emphasise the individual at the cost of the common good?

The Vedanta cannot and does not emphasise the individual self. The aim is the realisation of the Absolute which is the same everywhere, identically the same in the self as well as in what appears as the not-self. The ultimate realisation finds the self everywhere and the not-self as absorbed in the self. There is nothing that appears as opposed to or different from the self. There cannot be any talk of the good of the individual as distinct from the good of all at this stage. Liberation implies the realisation of the Absolute, not as an object distinct from the subject, but as the all-pervading reality that absorbs the subject as well and leaves no distinction between the subject and the object. The individual does not realise the Absolute, but the individual is raised to the level of the Absolute which reveals itself; in other words, the individual is identified with the Absolute at this stage. The individual not only finds his identity with the Absolute but also his identity with the All. "*Yatra tu sarvam ātmaivābhūt*," "When everything becomes the self" is the text of the Upanishads. At this stage when nothing different from the self is seen or heard, how can the self distinguish between itself and others? It is a sheer misunderstanding of the nature of the Vedantic Absolute and its relation to the individual. Vedantic liberation is not the liberation of the individual, if the individual wants to retain his distinctness. There is no room for separation and separative individuality in the realisation of the Vedantic Absolute.

It is not only at the stage of the highest realisation that the individual does not have any thought of his own self as distinct from that of others, but even while he is on the way, he constantly engages himself in doing good to others. "Those who have controlled their senses perfectly and whose minds are evenly balanced in all conditions and who worship the Imperishable, the Ineffable, the

Unmanifest, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchangeable and the Eternal and *who are devoted to the welfare of all beings*, attain my very self." [1] The person who is on the way to realise God in all, to find God residing equally in all things and beings, cannot but devote himself to the good of all beings. 'Doing good to others' is 'doing good to himself'. It is not an act of charity or benevolence to him; it is not even sympathy or fellow-feeling. It is not doing good to an 'other' but doing good to one's own self, "Because he sees the Absolute present equally in all things, he does not injure the self by the self, and hence he reaches the supreme state." [2] Here the basis and the foundation of all altruism and fellow-feeling are set forth in clear terms. It is the Vedantic doctrine of the oneness of the Absolute and hence also the oneness of all beings that alone is capable of explaining the philosophy that underlies the Buddhist doctrine of *ahimsā* (non-violence) and the Christian conception of love and charity. We are to love one another and cherish no ill-feeling against any creature simply because we realise that the same Absolute resides equally in all of them. It is not merely in theory that the oneness is to be accepted; it is to be realised in practice as well. "Him I hold to be the best of the yogins, O Arjuna, who finds the pleasure and pain of all beings as he experiences them in himself." [3] Unless this experience is there, there cannot be the transition from the ego-centred individual to the God-centred soul, and all talk of the realisation of the Absolute spirit becomes mythical. If the vision of the aspirant is not expanded more and more as his mind is gradually rid of impurities, if the not-self is not gradually absorbed in the self and the distinction between his own self and that of another is not gradually obliterated, it is certainly not treading in the path of the Vedanta. The Vedantic realisation is of no value if it is not the transcending of the individualistic point of view by the universal, and if the Vedanta preaches anything definitely it is this: the Absolute is the

[1] *Bhagavadgītā*, XII, 3-4.
[2] *Bhagavadgītā*, XIII, 28
[3] *Ibid.*, VI, 32.

whole truth of the individual and the individual has no reality apart from the Absolute. It is the wonder of wonders how the Vedanta of all religions, could be charged with individualism in any form.

The charge is often heard that there is no active mysticism in the Vedanta. By active mysticism is meant selfless work for the cause of humanity by the person who has realised God. Those who bring this charge against Vedantism have in mind the Christian saints who devoted their lives to the cause of the suffering humanity. As against the lives of these saints actively engaged in relieving the distress of the sick and doing good to humanity at large, the westerner places the case of the Vedantist Jīvanmukta whom he thinks to be sitting idle with closed eyes and caring nothing for what happens in the world. This idea of passive mysticism of the Vedanta is mistaken and has got to be revised. The conception that the Vedantist denies the world and has no concern for it is also a misrepresentation of the Vedantic view. There is no antagonism between Brahman and the world, between Jñāna and Karma, between knowledge and action. If the Vedantist finds that the world is not there after attaining knowledge, if his residing in Brahman necessarily destroys the appearance of the world, if, in other words, a relation of opposition is supposed to exist between Brahman and *jagat*, then the fundamental position of Vedantism is misunderstood. Brahman, being the Highest Synthesis and the Absolute that reconciles all opposition, can have nothing opposed to it. The world is not annihilated by Brahman, but has its support in Brahman. That the world appears is due to its grounding in Brahman. Brahman does not obstruct or hinder the appearance of the world but supports it, that is, it is not its *bādhaka* but its *sādhaka*. Even nescience has its ground in Brahman and can manifest itself only because Brahman underlies it. That the world manifests itself now does not involve that Brahman is not existing now. Brahman is omnipresent and everpresent, and had it been the case that Brahman and the world could not exist simultaneously, then there would have been no chance for the world to appear at all. The truth is that the realisation of the Absolute shows the world to be

limited and partial, to be relative and conditioned, to be false and not ultimately real. The Christian saint working for the good of humanity also knows, as much as the Vedantist, the distinction between flesh and spirit, between the temporal and the Eternal, between the kingdom of earth and the kingdom of Heaven, and there is no reason to suppose that the Vedantist realising the relative values of the things of the world should ignore the world any more than his fellow-brethren. The simultaneous presentation of the Infinite and the finite, of the Absolute and the relative, of the Eternal and the temporal, of the Abiding and the evanescent, cannot but have the same effect in all, *viz.*, the perception of the reality of the one and the falsity of the other, of the absoluteness (pāramārthikatva) of the One and the relativity (vyavahārikatva) and the pragmatic or working reality only of the other. The Vedanta only shows the logical implication of the perception. If a thing is only relatively real, it is as good or as bad as being false, because even false perceptions like illusions and hallucinations, or even mere imaginings like dreams are also relatively real, real for the time being and for the subject under illusion or experiencing the dream.

As there is no antagonism between Brahman and the world, there is also no opposition between Karma and Jñāna, between action and knowledge. It is a false reading of the Vedanta which finds knowledge and action opposed to each other and thinks that the liberated jñānin can perform no action. The transcendental knowledge that is identical with Brahman can have nothing opposed to it and is really the substratum and support of everything. When Śaṁkara says that there cannot be simultaneity (samuccaya) of *jñāna* and *karma*, of knowledge and action, he means by action the movements that proceed from ignorance, the changes that result from a limited view of things. Ignorance and knowledge, the limited vision and the infinite wisdom, cannot exist together as belonging to the same order of reality. Where the whole presents itself in its entirety and shines in its own glory, the partial presentation of itself realises its shortcomings and reduces itself to a false appearance. Where knowledge is real, ignorance appears to be false. The

falsity also appears because of the underlying reality of knowledge. The simultaneity of knowledge and ignorance, of Brahman and the world, is not denied; what is denied is the simultaneous *reality* of both. In the reality of knowledge, ignorance becomes falsified, that is, reduced to a false appearance. The jñānin performs actions, does all the things in the world, finds resistance nowhere knowing them to belong to the world of appearances, while resting in the Brāhmic consciousness all the time. The jñānin who identifies himself with the Absolute cannot perform actions that imply an agent and identification with the limited self; the actions of the liberated do not result from such identification and are not *actions* in the ordinary sense of the term. Śaṁkara denies the simultaneity of action and knowledge in this sense. The jñānin cannot identify himself with the Absolute and with the limited doer or the agent simultaneously and hence cannot be said to perform action. His movements are not *actions*, that is, do not proceed from the ego-sense. It is not to be supposed, however, that he cannot perform serious and complicated actions and that his actions are restricted to simple movements of the body. The jñānin performs all actions, performs actions incessantly and is not fatigued by his actions. His actions can be compared with those of God, who says that although there is nothing which *must* be done by Him as His duty, yet He performs actions incessantly for the maintenance of the universe. Nobody can hold that the actions of God proceed from ignorance, as God is omniscient and is never lacking in supreme wisdom. If God can perform such a difficult and complicated action as the government of this universe and if His perfect knowledge is no bar to His performance of actions, why should the jñānin be supposed to be under the limitation? If actions are supposed to be a hindrance to the perfect knowledge of the liberated, it does not show a proper understanding of the Vedantic Absolute, which is perfect freedom. There is and can be no resistance anywhere when the Absolute is realised and Karma implying the *empirical* division of the doer, the process of action and the result of the action, is quite consistent with the *transcendental* unity and oneness. This division between

the *pāramārthika* and the *vyavahārika*, the transcendental and the empirical, the noumenal and the phenomenal, the Absolute and the relative, the unlimited and the limited is the key to Vedantic metaphysics and should never be forgotten. There is no inconsistency in maintaining the reality of the Absolute and the falsity of the relative, the unconditionedness of the Infinite and the conditioned and limited nature of the finite. It is always to be remembered that *mithyātva* (falsity) according to the Vedanta, is *paricchinnatva* (limitation and finitude), and if the world has been declared to be unreal, it is because of its finitude. What is finite and small (alpam) is perishable (martyam); it is only the Unlimited, the Infinite, the Bhūmā that is imperishable and is of the nature of Bliss (sukham). There is no abiding happiness in what is perishable and, therefore, if Eternal Happiness is the goal, the reality of the Infinite and the falsity of the finite should be clearly perceived and understood.

All the misinterpretations seem to be based on the one fundamental error of supposing that the Vedanta teaches a transcendent and *not* an immanent Absolute. It is difficult to understand how such a misconception has found place both among European and Indian scholars, but there is not the least doubt that it is ignorance of the original Vedantic texts that is responsible for it. The Vedanta holds that Brahman is immanent in the universe, that Brahman entered into all the things of the world after having created them.[1] It not merely speaks of the maintenance and superintending of the world, but even of *entering* into it. Brahman took all forms in order that Its real nature might be revealed.[2] As the spider spins the web out of itself, as the sparks come out of fire so also from this (Absolute) self, all Prāṇa, all world, all gods, all beings come out.[3] The Absolute Energy that holds all things and beings is designated Prāṇa. All things are not only created by Brahman, but all things are Brahman. These are not different from Brahman. If the

[1] tat sṛṣṭvā tadevānuprāvisat (*Bṛh. Up.*).
[2] *Ibid.*, II, V, 19.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, 1, 20.

Vedanta preaches also a transcendence, it is never at the cost of immanence. It shows that because it is the All, it transcends All. A talk of transcendence without immanence is sure to end in empty abstraction and the western critic is not very wrong in regarding the Vedantic Absolute as an abstraction because the Absolute has so often been supposed to be transcendent and not immanent. If the Absolute is not immanent in the world, if the world remains outside the Absolute, the whole purpose of Advaitism is frustrated. It is because of this that the Upanishads have been very careful to show the immanence of the Absolute in the universe. As prāṇa, the Absolute is immanent in the whole of this universe, and if the transcendence of the Absolute has been shown, it is as Ātman, as the truth underlying Prāṇa itself. The Upaniṣad or the secret designation of the Ātman is *satyasya satyam*, the truth of truth. Prāṇa is the truth; the Ātman is the truth of that truth. *Tasyopaniṣad satyasya satyam iti prāṇā vai satyam teṣāmeṣa satyam.*[1] This is the text of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, which shows clearly Brahman as Prāṇa and also as Ātman, the Immanence as well as transcendence of the Absolute.

Ya pṛthivyām tiṣṭhan pṛthivyā antaro yam pṛthivī na veda yasya pṛthivī śarīram ya pṛthivīm antaro yamayati eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmyamṛtah. "He who while residing in the Earth is different from it, whom the Earth knows not, whose body is the Earth, who controls the Earth from within, this is the Self, the dweller in the hearts of all beings, the Imperishable and the Immortal." This and the following texts show that He is in the Earth, in water, in the fire, in the mind, in the sky, in the heavens, in the sun, in the moon and in the stars, in the directions, in energy, in all beings, in the life principle, in speech, in the eyes, in the ears, in the skin, in the mind and in the intellect, and yet is different from them all. There is no other seer, no other listener, no other thinker, no other experiencer than this immortal self; whatever is different from this self is perishable (ārtam). These texts of one of the oldest of the Upaniṣads leave no doubt that the Vedanta has never

[1] II, i, 20.

preached a transcendent Absolute that is not also immanent. The same Absolute that as Prāṇa holds names and forms is also the *asanga ātman*, the self that is pure and absolutely unattached and transcends all names and forms. The *virāṭ* is the universal Energy or Power that pervades and rules over all things in their gross (sthūla) forms; the Hiraṇyagarbha is the cosmic soul of things in their subtle (sūkṣma) forms; Iśwara is the name given to the Lord of all things in their causal (kāraṇa) states. These three show the immanence of the Absolute in all things and beings of the universe. Brahman or Ātman is the transcendent conception that goes beyond the three states,—the gross, the subtle and the causal, or the waking, the dreaming and the state of dreamless sleep. At first the detached nature of the self is *inferred* from its presence in the states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleeping, all differing from one another. What accompanies all states which differ from one another and cancel one another must be different from all of them. If the Absolute appears as a thing having certain attributes and also as another thing having just the contradictory attributes, it is evident that neither set of attributes really belongs to the Absolute and expresses its nature. To realise the Absolute as immanent is to see how spirit inhabits matter, how the pure *cit* appears through the adjuncts (upādhis). To realise the Absolute as transcendent is to see that spirit has no inherent connection with matter, is to perceive that the form through which the spirit is seen is only an adjunct and not an attribute or adjective. It is matter that seems to create a division in spirit, that shows the spirit as if it is divided, as if it admits of degrees of superiority or inferiority. The realisation of transcendence is the perception of the unconditionality of the spirit, is the perception of its freedom, of its *asangatva* or detachedness, of its entire dissociation from matter, of its belonging to an altogether different and higher order of reality than that of matter. In order to have full knowledge of the Absolute, we have to see not only how spirit informs matter but also how spirit transcends matter, not only to see how the Absolute resides in names and forms but also to realise how the Absolute *assumes* those names and forms and how

the Absolute is not at all touched by them. A careful and close perception of immanence is the sure way to lead to transcendence. To see the Absolute *in* the name and the form, to realise the Absolute *in* the heart, is also to perceive that the Absolute is not the name and the form but that which is *in* it, not the heart but that which is within it and hence different from it, not the various divisions which matter introduces, but the divisionless consciousness or *cit* that shines through them and goes beyond them all. During meditation, if the first impressions are that consciousness is seated somewhere and has a locus, if the spirit is felt as being in some definite form or having some particular name, as the feeling deepens and as there is entrance into deeper and deeper levels, it is realised that there is no longer any reference to any particular name or any particular form but that the *cit* shines in its native splendour without any restriction or limitation whatsoever, showing that there cannot be and there is not any locus, any space division of the *cit*. In the Sūtras of Patañjali we have *deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā*. It is only at the level of dhāraṇā or fixation that we require a locus or a fixed spot where we have to place the object of meditation. As we rise higher and higher up and pass through the stage of *dhyāna* (meditation) to *samādhi* (absorption), the locus is no longer required, the space-reference is left behind. Although in the *savikalpa samādhi*, there is something like an object-reference, in the *nirvikalpa* or the *nirvīja stage*, this reference also is eliminated and consciousness shines without any division or difference, without any limitation or adjunct (upādhi) whatsoever. This state of transcendence is beautifully described in the Srimad Bhāgavatam :[1] "The mind (which acts like the fishing hook in getting hold of God) of the person who has set his heart on the Lord, whose heart has melted because of devotion to Him, who experiences repeated flashes of delight and who is immersed in the Ocean of bliss, suddenly gets itself detached from the object of meditation." Śrīdhara Swāmī, the commentator, remarks that here the author shows the spontaneous cessation of the working of the mind (citto-

[1] III, xviii, 34-38.

parama) when it is fixed on the form of the Great Lord, Hari, the personified image of Bliss. When the mind gets itself detached from the object and becomes thoroughly *nirviṣaya* (objectless) and *muktāśraya* (supportless), it ceases to function in its discursive state and becomes absorbed in its source (nirvāṇam icchati). In other words, it ceases to be modified as states of consciousness and becomes identified with the state of Brahman (vṛttirupatām parityajya brahmākāreṇa pariṇamate). At this stage, the division between the meditator (dhyātā) and the meditated (dhyeya) becomes obliterated, and only the one indivisible (akhaṇḍa) ātman is realised, because the *guṇas* that are responsible for the threefold division no longer work. Once this ātman is realised, there is no more identification with the body due to the entire dismissal of nescience (avidyā). As a man under the influence of liquor does not perceive whether his clothes are on his body or not, so also the Jīvanmukta after the realisation of the Indivisible Self, the *akhaṇḍa* and the *asanga* ātman, does not perceive whether the body is there or not. The body persists so long as the *prārabdha karmas* which have begun functioning continue, but it does not matter to the Jīvanmukta whether it exists or not and there is no sense of reality attached to it, just as no importance is placed on the things experienced in dreams. There is no reliance on the body, and the body does not form any part of the self. This is transcendence of the self where it is free from all associations, all adjuncts and is perfectly unconditional and infinite.

The difficult thing is to realise the immanence of God, to find the spirit as informing matter. When names and forms only are seen and not the *cit* behind, it is only perception of matter and nothing of the spirit. The spirit remains entirely hidden, and materialism seems to be the truth. This is the stage where the majority of people reside. We seem to be talking about God, we seem to hold that God is immanent in everything of this universe, but the truth is that we see God nowhere, we see nothing but the material forms, nothing behind matter and its processes. The immanental perception begins with the realisation of something other than matter, something not extended or divisible,

something other than what can be measured in terms of quantity, something to which the categories of space and time are not properly applicable. The modern conception of Energy replacing Matter is a move in the right direction and represents an advance towards the realm of the spirit. The doctrine of immanence is preached when only glimpses, partial experiences, are had of the spirit, when the spirit is seen to be divided and in segments. But when the spirit is realised in its entirety and in its fullness, in its purity and in its native splendour, and the entire, undivided and indivisible spirit is seen in all things of the universe, its transcendence is at once experienced. It is seen not to be limited to any particular thing, not to be inherent in or attached to any particular thing or things, not manifested or expressed in and through the particulars, but to be the One Indivisible Infinite that is not touched by the finite or the particular at all. The realisation of transcendence follows spontaneously (ayatnataḥ) and as a matter of course, as the verse quoted from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has shown, if there has been the previous perception of immanence. He who is in the All transcends the All; He who is in everything is limited to nothing and is *in* nothing but really *beyond* everything.

Sufism

Sufism is Islamic Mysticism and implies that form of religious life in Islam which places the greatest emphasis on inner experience and not so much on the performance of external rituals. Āl-Ghazāli, the prince of the Islamic mystics, says that his study of Sufism has shown him that there is a great deal of difference between *knowledge* of the way to God and *experience* of the way, and that Sufism consists not in words but in actual experience, and that to know the meaning of renunciation is not the same thing as actually to renounce the world and all that it can offer. The prayer of Āl-Ghazāli, " O Lord, let us not pass from this world

except as gnostics, perfected in gnosis, submerged in the ocean of Thine unicity, set free from the fetters of this world and its pomps and vanities, through Thy mercy, O Thou most Merciful " seems to contain the essence of the sublime passage of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad. " The man who departs from this universe without knowing and realising Him (the Absolute) is really pitiable (kṛpaṇah); he who, on the other hand, passes from here after experiencing the Absolute fulfils the mission of his life and attains the highest expansion (brāhmaṇah)." Āl-Ghazāli's expressions, ' perfected in gnosis ' and ' submerged in the ocean of Thine unicity ' leave no doubt that he is speaking of no mere theoretical knowledge, but of direct experience and realisation where knowledge has its perfection and culmination and where Infinite Bliss reigns. The One purpose of the Sufi is to drink deep in the ocean of Bliss and to be united with the Most High. " Their every purpose is with God united, their high ambitions mount to Him Alone."

The Sufi renounces the world, forsakes everything that is unclean, rids himself of all impurities, abandons all the portion of the carnal soul, takes to the life of poverty which means not merely lack of wealth, but lack of the very desire for it, or as it is beautifully put, which signifies the empty heart as well as the empty hand, and wholly engages himself in the recollection and meditation of God, becomes absorbed in God and thinks of nothing else but God. The poverty of the mystic really signifies the abandonment of everything but God, the rejection of everything which is not the spirit. It is only those who are pure and poor in heart that can hope to see God. The etymology of the term ' Sufi ' implies all this. Those who derive the term from the Arabic ' Safā ' find in the Sufis ' the purity of their hearts and the cleanliness of their acts '. Others find in the term a reference to the people of the Bench (suttab) and hold that the Sufis are so called because of their resemblance to the people of the Bench " who spent their time in worship, imitating the Prophet and searching the Quran and the Hadith ", and did not engage themselves in worldly business. The derivation that is mostly accepted is connected with *Ṣūf* which means ' wool '. The Sufis were in the habit

of wearing coarse woollen garments, as a symbol of their voluntary poverty and renunciation of worldly pleasures. The people of the Bench were called ' strangers ' because they departed from their homes, and also called ' travellers ' because of their constant journeyings. They took food only as much as was necessary for satisfying hunger and used clothes only as much as was necessary to hide their nakedness. If the Sufis are so called because of the resemblance of their lives to those of the people of the Bench, they are very much like the Paribrājaka Sannyāsins of Hinduism, who have no fixed habitation but who take themselves to journeyings and have forsaken all worldly desires and are satisfied with the minimum of food and clothing and who are always absorbed in the meditation of the Absolute. The term ' Sufi ' has sometimes been derived from *Ṣaff* meaning that the Sufis are first in rank before God through the elevation of their desires towards Him and the turning of their hearts unto Him. The Paribrājaka Sannyāsin is also the first in rank in the Hindu order because of their renouncing of the world and constant absorption in God.

Sufism believes in the inherent divinity of the soul and holds that it is only impurity that stands in the way of union with the Absolute. The removal of the impurity is the difficult task of the aspirant, and when this is done, the rest is easy. Āl-Ghazāli speaks of a tradition according to which Allah hath seventy thousand veils of light and darkness, ten thousand at each of the seven stages through which the aspirant has to pass before he can stand face to face with the Absolute. Sufism holds the same doctrine as that of Vedantism that the individual transcending his narrowness becomes the Absolute, and Professor Nicholson rightly observes, " The whole of Sufism rests on the belief that when the individual self is lost, the universal self is found, or in religious language, that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicate and *become united with God* ".[1] The loss of the individual self which Professor Nicholson speaks of, is not here the main point and is not to be taken at its surface value. If the individual

[1] *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 59.

becomes united with God and becomes one with the universal self, it is an immense expansion of the individual self, it is the gaining and actualisation of its ideal and is certainly no loss of itself. The loss of the individual self merely means the extinction of the narrowness, the giving up of the limitation, the abandoning of the portion of the carnal self, the rejection of matter which is the individuating or the limiting principle, and not in any sense the rejection of the spirit. God, the Universal Self, is One, and cannot but be One, and it is the stage of ecstasy (wajd) that first gives an experience of the unity of the individual and the universal self. In ecstasy the soul has flight to the limitless region where the one all-pervading Reality shines and there is no room for any limitation to work.

Real purification begins with the inward vision or rather glimpse of the Divine, when the gap between the ideal and the actual is vividly felt and there results a sincere and strong desire for eradicating the impurities that act as a veil and hinder the realisation of God. Repentance and renunciation, humility and asceticism owe their origin to the longing for emptying the heart of self so that it may become the dwelling place of God. The stage of purification really forms half the way and when this stage is passed, the traveller arrives at the safety zone from which there is no risk of a fall or a slip and has already the goal in sight. The purgation that is necessary cannot be achieved by anything short of a complete conversion, a total re-orientation of values and a thorough change in the outlook of life. An entirely new life sets in with the glimpse of the Real, and the process of purification and preparation that starts does not stop until the goal is reached. This stage is often called *Ubudiyyat* or the stage of service. The first thing required of the aspirant at this stage is sincere repentance, which comes out of the 'awakening' of the soul and the perception of the past evil ways and sins.

The next is the stage of *Ishq* or intense hankering for the vision of God. At this stage the aspirant likes to remain in constant remembrance of God and to forget everything else; if he forgets God even for a moment, he becomes very much annoyed. This corresponds to what in the Hindu

Bhaktiśāstras has been described as *kṣaṇavismaraṇe parama-vyākulatā*, a moment's forgetting becomes the source of great anxiety and suffering. The aspirant at this stage shuns the company of men and is not willing to spend even a moment in vain; he feels that the soul which has not yet found God has no right to enjoy rest or repose.

The third is the stage of *Zuhd* or renunciation. This is not merely the giving-up of transient earthly pleasures, which is required even of the novice when he enters the Mystic Path, but it represents the renunciation of everything but God. It may be supposed roughly to correspond to the stage of Sannyāsa or giving-up of all desires.

The next stage is that of *Mārifat* or the stage of knowledge and cognition. The knowledge of God is the most important thing in a man's life and is the sole mission of his existence. The stage of Mārifat is attained when man devotes himself to the attainment of the knowledge of God and turns away his inmost thoughts from all that is not God. It is to be noted that this is theoretical knowledge, *paroksha jnāna* and not *aparoksha jnāna* or direct revelation.

The fifth stage is the stage of *Wajd* or ecstasy. At this stage the contemplation of God leads to excitement and induces in the aspirant the stage of ecstasy. The soul seems to be lifted to the realm of God and there is an overflow of joy. The contemplation is no longer a theoretical state, an idea, but the idea has been touched with emotion and has its effect felt in the organism. The abundance of joy and the somatic resonance show the presence of the emotion and prove that God is something that is being felt as an objective reality.

The next is the stage of *Haqiqat* or reality. The aspirant is now shown the true nature of the ultimate Reality. He now learns that God is the one reality and that all things come from God. The so-called secondary causes are not causes at all and are of no account. This is what *tawḥīd* really means and Āl-Ghazāli rightly thinks that *tawakkul* is not different from *tawḥīd* rightly understood. "God is our sufficiency and how excellent is He in whom we trust." [1] This

[1] *Ihyā*, IV, p. 210.

trust in God can only come from the realisation of His true nature. "When all things are seen to come from God Most High, and the vision of God obliterates all that comes between", He alone is worshipped and none other. This perfect trust and absolute surrender represent all that is meant by *twakkul*. The aspirant now abandons himself to God in complete confidence and merges his will in the will of God. An eminent writer describes this stage as follows:[1] "He considers himself as a dead body moved by the Divine decree and is content that the Divine strength should replace his own human weakness." The Sufi thinks that God is All-Glorious and takes his daily bread from His hands and sees nothing that comes between, that is, sees no secondary causes at all. It is to be noted that this knowledge or illumination is very different from the gnosis or cognition belonging to the fourth stage. It is no longer theoretical knowledge or indirect knowledge, but at this stage, it has become direct intuition. Because the aspirant sees God as the only reality that pervades everywhere (tawhid), *twakkul* also comes along with it. This corresponds to the stage of perfect self-surrender (śaraṇāgati) of the Bhakti schools, which culminates in and is almost identical with perfect *jnāna* or realisation of the Absolute.

The last stage is known as the stage of *waṣl* or union. This stage precedes the final experience of *fanā wa baqā* annihilation and subsistence;[2] which cannot be stated as one state among other states, but which is the sufi's *ultima thule* that does away with all distinctions of states or stages. The sufi èxpression *fanā wa baqā*, annihilation and subsistence does not leave any room for misinterpretation. As both the terms 'annihilation' and 'subsistence' are used together, there is no scope for thinking that it speaks of utter nothingness as the Buddhist Nirvana and the Vedantic Moksha have often been supposed to mean. If it is the annihilation of the individual, it is the subsistence of the universal as well. There is no denying that there is the state of *fanā* or passing away from the self resulting in the state of *baqā* or subsis-

[1] Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazali, the Mystic*, p. 168.

[2] I. A. Subhan, *Sufism*, p. 72.

tence in God, in which the aspirant loses all-consciousness of himself and remains conscious only of the Divine, and the worshipper is absorbed in whom he worships. The realisation of perfect union or absorption, the experience of absolute identity or non-difference, the declaration 'I am the Reality' —'Anal haqq'—is what makes sufism a supra-personal religion and gives it its distinctive characteristic. It is, of course, not a thing to be given to the general public and its unrestricted publicity may very well do harm to the society and it is in order to guard against this evil that Islamic Mystics have sometimes guarded themselves carefully in their expressions. The truth seems to be expressed by Margaret Smith when she says "though he (Al-Ghazali) tries to guard himself against the admission that the creature can be actually identified with the Creator, *that is, in fact, the conclusion which he reaches.*"[1] However Al-Ghazali may attempt to reconcile the sufi view with the orthodox faith by saying that it is not real identity (ittihad) but only the ecstasy of the passionate lover, he cannot conceal his mind when he describes the experience, " He has entered into the pure and absolute unicity of the One and in the Kingdom of the One and Alone mortals reach the end of their ascent, for there is no ascent beyond it, since ascent involves multiplicity, implying an ascent *from* somewhere and an ascent *to* somewhere and when multiplicity has been eliminated, unity is established and relationship ceases, signs are effaced, there remains neither height nor depth, nor one to descend or ascend. No higher ascent for the soul is possible for there is no height beyond the highest and no multiplicity beyond the Unity, and since multiplicity has been effaced, no further ascent." [2] This is certainly not the description of ' the ecstasy of the passionate lover '. It describes clearly and unequivocally the experience of the aspirant when he reaches the end of his journey. No passion is expressed in the words used and there is no indication that the experience is only emotional. It is a beautiful description of the apprehension of the Highest; it is an intellectual and cognitive

[1] *Al-Ghazali, the Mystic*, p. 233.
[2] *Miskat Al-Anwār*, p. 118.

presentation of the experience. As the apprehension of the Highest and the ultimate Reality is possible only by the whole dimension of existence there must be emotional and volitional elements as well in the experience, but the description quoted above seems to carefully avoid all expressions relating to feeling so that there may not be the least suspicion that the experience is only emotional. Āl-Ghazāli is not a mystic of the emotional type as most of the christian and sufi mystics are, and hence his writings are specially valuable in helping us to form an idea of what the sufi means by the experience of identity in the unitive life. Those who have attained the unitive life, says Al-Ghazali, have attained unto a Being transcending all that can be apprehended by sight or insight, for they find Him to transcend in His sanctity all that we have described heretofore. But these can be divided : for some of them, all that can be perceived is consumed away, blotted out, annihilated, but the soul remains contemplating that supreme Beauty and Holiness and contemplating itself in the Beauty which it has acquired by attaining to the Divine Presence, and for such a one, things seen are blotted out, but not the seeing soul. But some pass beyond this, and they are *the Elect of the Elect*, who are consumed by the glory of His exalted countenance, and the greatness of the Divine Majesty overwhelms them and they are annihilated and they themselves are no more. They no longer contemplate themselves, having passed away from themselves and there remains only the One, the Real, and the meaning of His word, ' All things perish save His countenance ' is known by actual experience ".[1] These lines quoted by Margaret Smith leave no doubt that Al-Ghazali is describing the mystic experience of the ultimate Reality stage by stage. There are mystics for whom the duality between the subject and the object, between the ' seeing soul ' and the ' object seen ', is not fully overcome, and although the things of the world no longer form the object, the mystic is conscious of himself as contemplating the supreme Beauty and Holiness which now becomes the sole object of his attention and he is not yet fully lost to himself. But there is a higher grade of mystics, who are the Elect

[1] *Al-Ghazali, the Mystic*, p. 192.

of the Elect, who lose themselves completely in the Absolute and are annihilated and do not retain anything, not even a faint trace, of their separateness. This is absolute experience, this is experience of Identity, this is *anal-Huq*, this is ' I am the Truth ', this is ' soham ', this is ' I am He ', this is the end of the Path, this is the supreme experience, this is the highest Experience, and there is nothing higher than the Highest. This is *fanā*, the annihilation or death of the individual, the extinction of separateness and separative life, resulting in *baqā*, subsistence in God, that is, immortality. At this stage, the worshipper thinks no longer of his worship and ' has so passed away from himself that he feels nothing of his bodily members, nor of what is passing without nor what passes within his own mind. He is so perfectly absorbed that he is unconscious not only of himself but of his absorption. " For *fanā* from *fanā* is", in the language of Al-Ghazali, " the goal of *fanā* '. Al-Ghazali says that this absorption at first is like a flash of lightning lasting for a short time, then it becomes habitual and a means of enabling the soul to ascend to the world above, where pure and essential Reality is manifested to it, and at the last ' it looks upon God face to face '."[1] Although most of the expressions used in the description seem to suggest that it is an object-consciousness in which the subject is completely absorbed, there are some other expressions as well which definitely indicate that it is not merely object-consciousness but transcendental experience that is above the division of the subject and the object. When it is said that the light of the *knowledge* of the unity is extinguished in the light of actual experience, and that the *existence* of the unitarian is submerged in the whole itself, and that he is submerged in the One and All, there remains hardly any doubt that the dividing line has been crossed and there has been entrance into the transcendental realm, where the division between the seer and the seen, between the subject and the object, has no scope whatsoever. If the whole excludes the experiencing subject, it is not really the whole; if, on the other hand, the whole includes the subject,

[1] *Kitāb-al-Arabain*, pp. 52-55.

and the subject finds itself identified with the whole, then only *fanā* acquires its significance, and Sufism comes on a par with Vedantism. If the subject is merely absorbed in the object and the object shines as object in its full glory, it is not the transcendental realisation that resolves the subject and the object both. The Vedantic experience is not the vision of the object which devours up the subject, as it is in the case of the *bhakta* (devotee), but is a realisation where there is neither the seer nor the seen, where neither the subject nor the object predominates, where the divisionless one, the Absolute, the spirit or the *Cit*, the *prakāśa* itself shines. It is to be clearly understood that the Vedantic Absolute is not at all perceived as an object and can never be an object. According to the Vedanta what appears as an object (dṛśya) is different from consciousness and as such is *jaḍa*. If the experience of the sufi even at its final stage is the realisation of the ultimate Reality as an object, it falls short of Vedantic Absolutism. If, on the other hand, it is an experience where the experiencer himself is lost, where the distinction between the subject, object and process is transcended and the One Reality shines alone, where all multiplicity including the division between the seer and the seen, the self and the not-self, has disappeared, sufism becomes identical with Vedantism.

The Sufi *Pir* resembles the Hindu Guru strikingly. The first requirement for the aspirant wanting to live the life of a sufi is to place himself under a *shaykh* or *pir*, just as the Hindu seeker wanting to live a spiritual life must place himself under a guru. The relation between the *murshid* and the *murid* in sufism is exactly the same as between the guru and the *śiṣya* in Hinduism. The disciple is to obey the spiritual guide blindly and the word of the *pir* is absolute law to his disciple. The *murshid* guides the *murid* in every detail of his life and lays down rules to be observed by him in actual practice.

The *pir* has the power to transmit spiritual power to his disciple through *tawajjuh* or concentration. The disciple is required to think sitting near the *pir*, that he is receiving spiritual power from his *murshid*, and the *murshid* transmits his power to his disciple. Sometimes a mere look at a

person is enough to create a transformation in his life. The Hindu scriptures speak of various forms of initiation, and transmitting influence by casting glances is one of them. The pir is able to lead his *murid* from the beginning of the journey to the end, just as the Hindu guru is competent to guide the disciple through all trials and tribulations and take him to the journey's end. The *murid* has to be so much devoted to his *murshid* that he is to find him in all men and all things and to annihilate his own self in that of his master. This condition is called self-annihilation into the *shaykh*. At this stage, the *shaykh* passes him over to the spiritual influence of the original founder of the particular path to which they belong. The disciple now becomes almost a part of the founder (pir) and possesses all his spiritual and supernatural powers. This is known as the condition of self-annihilation into the pir. At the next stage, the disciple is led up to the Prophet himself whom he now sees in all things. This is self-annihilation into the Prophet. At the last stage, the *murid* " becomes a part of the Divinity and sees Him in all things ".[1]

Orthodox Islam does not believe in the cult of the pir or the guru and does not like to think of any one in the role of a partner of God. The Hindu guru is identified in principle with God and no difference is supposed to exist between the guru and the *iṣṭa*, between the spiritual guide and the divine object of worship. Orthodox Islam would regard this to be nothing short of blasphemy, but sufism, although it never identifies the pir with God, accepts the cult of the guru and gives it a very important place in the spiritual life of the aspirant. The pir, like the guru, occupies a unique position, and is the sole guide and protector of the aspirant in his search for God. It is he who shows him the way and saves him in times of danger and peril. He serves as the intermediary between God and Man and may truly be described as Man-God or God-Man. The Hindu thinks that God can be realised only through the help and favour of the guru who acts as the intermediary. The guru takes the position of the son of God who is also the son of

[1] Rose, *The Dervishes*, p. 330.

Man. The guru is a man but in him divinity is manifest. He is the concrete personification of divinity and the disciple sees the ideal actualised in him. As Professor Nicholson beautifully puts it, "God and Man become one in the Perfect Man—the enraptured prophet or saint—whose religious function as a mediator between man and God corresponds with his metaphysical function as the unifying principle by means of which the opposed terms of reality and appearance are harmonised ".[1] The ideal which was so long an abstraction finds a concrete embodiment in the guru. God seems to be too remote for the novice who wants to enter the Path; there seems to be no resemblance, no affinity, between him and the person he wants to reach. At this juncture, the pir or the guru is the person who is most needed, who is a man amongst men but who possesses godly qualities; who is God but appears in the form of man whom one can perceive and understand. The religions which believe in Prophethood may dispense with the conception of the guru, because the Prophet himself occupies the position of the intermediary. In Hinduism the guru is essential for bridging over the great gulf between man and God. Sufism realises the supreme importance of the *murshid* in things spiritual and although orthodox Islam did not at first accept many of its doctrines, from the time of Al-Ghazali a reconciliation has been effected, and now much of sufism has found its place in orthodox Islam. "A pious Muslim some time or other in his life generally gets initiated into some religious order " [2] and is granted the privilege of being reckoned as a spiritual child of the saint who had founded that order. This recognition of saints and pirs and shrines is not in strict consistency with the orthodox teachings of Islam, at least in the rigid form in which these are generally interpreted. But the fact is that sufism has found an abiding place in Islam and is integrally related to it. The most important reason for this absorption of much of sufism in Islam seems to be the emphasis that sufism lays on the shaykh or the spiritual

[1] *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 84-85.
[2] I. A. Sobhan, *Sufism*, p. 320.

guide and the immense practical benefit which the disciples were observed to derive from him. Religion becomes a monotonous, hackneyed thing and a mere set of dogmas and formulae having no connection with life, if it is supposed to be confined to the words of the sacred texts alone. Something more than the words of the gospel or the texts of the sacred books is necessary to vitalise the soul and to kindle in it the spirit of the Divine and generate a genuine hankering after it. The sight of a great personality in whose exalted presence one's own self becomes dwarfed into insignificance, in whose loving companionship one discovers a real friend who never deserts, a guide who always watches, a character which is never found wanting, and in whose thought one feels oneself attracted to the sublime and to be filled with admiration and reverence, cannot but start a movement within the soul and lead it on towards the ideal. This living Presence, the concrete embodiment of the ideal, is more forceful than a thousand precepts laid down in the scriptures and is absolutely necessary for a person seeking spiritual progress. Those who have not been fortunate in their lives to meet such an exalted personality, those who have not been favoured with the vision, that is, those who have not seen divinity, even for a moment, in any human person, have really missed the most important thing which could have effected a conversion. The difference between the sublime personality and seeker's own littleness is so keenly felt and the ideal is so vividly actualised before him that it cannot but leave a deep impression which starts working. The teachings of the scriptures, the texts of the sacred books, get verified by the experience of the adepts and become infused with a new life. The cult of the pir or the guru signifies and means this. The experience, the realisation, of the pir or the adept adds something to the beauty and liveliness of the teachings and gives them a fresh meaning and a new life. The remoteness of the time at which the founders of religions lived and the incompetence of words to express the realisation or experience make it incumbent on one desiring the experience to have living contact with one who *has* the experience and is able to transmit it to others. The sufi finds such a person in his *sháykh* and the

Hindu in his guru. Orthodox Islam was not slow to recognise the importance of actual experience in religion and therefore incorporated the rich experiences of the mystics into it in the name of *Shathiyat*. The sufi is a lover of God and as such stands on a different footing from ordinary men. An *ashiq* or lover is permitted to act and speak in ways which would be 'presumptuous and even blasphemous' on the part of others. The Bhakti schools in Hinduism also distinguish between the *vidhi-mārga* and the *rāga-mārga*, the life of the Law and the life of Love; when one has attained the latter stage, one need not observe the rules and laws strictly. True love is unconditional and cannot be governed by laws and conditions. Islam has regained its vitality due to the absorption of sufism in it. It is not to be supposed, however, that sufism is an entirely new thing and has not its foundations in the Quran. Mohammad is regarded as the first sufi and some of his companions are counted amongst the earliest sufis. The Quran lays great emphasis on the realisation of God's Presence and a sufi is a person who seeks and strives after this realisation with all his heart. Mohammad engaged himself in mystical practices and was a great mystic. He passed sleepless nights in solitude seeking the realisation of God and had mystical experiences of the highest degree. Mohammad is believed to be the 'recipient of a two-fold revelation', the one embodied in the Quran, and the other within his heart. The former is meant for all and is obligatory on all persons; the latter is meant only for the chosen few through lines of succession. "The former is incorporated in the doctrinal teaching of the 'ulamā'; the latter is strictly esoteric, the mystical teaching of the sufis."[1] There is an esoteric aspect in every religion and sufism represents this esoteric element in Islam. When Hallāj was being executed for his alleged blasphemy, that is, for his using the expression Anal-Haqq, "I am the Truth", he is said to have prayed in a manner which shows that he had been granted a revelation which was denied to his fellow brethren. These are supposed to be the actual words he used: "O Lord, I entreat Thee, give me to be thankful

[1] Bevan Jones, *The People of the Mosque*, p. 265.

for the grace Thou hast bestowed upon me, in that Thou hast concealed from others' eyes what Thou hast made manifest to me of the glories of Thy shining countenance and in that Thou hast made it lawful for me to behold the mysteries of Thine inner consciousness which Thou hast made unlawful to others. As for these Thy servants who, zealous for Thy religion and desirous of Thy favour, have gathered to kill me, forgive and have mercy upon them, for verily if Thou hadst revealed to them what Thou hast hid from them, then should I not have suffered this anguish. Praise be to Thee in whatsoever Thou decreest." [2] This passage explains very clearly the distinction between the esoteric and the exoteric elements in religion. The higher truth that Hallāj expresses is a matter of direct realisation and experience with him, and as such he cannot doubt or deny it; others, not favoured with the experience of that level, cannot find any truth in it and take it to be blasphemy. Jesus Christ also praying for forgiveness for his crucifiers used similar expressions and said, "They know not what they do." All the controversies, all opposition and discord, have their source in what is stated by Hallāj, *viz.*, what is revealed to one is concealed from another. Had this salutary doctrine of *adhikārabhedavāda* or difference in the equipment and constitution of different individuals belonging to different levels—which forms the basis of Hinduism—been accepted by all religions, much of the evil, much murder and bloodshed could have been avoided.

To orthodox Islam God is more an object of fear than one of love, and the most important command seems to be "Thou shalt fear the Lord, thy God." It is sufism that introduces the conception of love and regards God as the supreme object of love. The devotee who loves God desires to be in constant remembrance of Him and actually the memory of God never leaves him and he is never unmindful of Him. As Al-Ghazali beautifully relates how God said to David, "He spoke falsely who claimed to love Me, if when night concealed him, he was unmindful of Me. Does

[2] *Kitāb al-Twasin*, Paris, 1913, quoted in I. A. Sobhan: *Sufism*, pp. 24-25.

not every lover desire to meet with his Beloved? and here I am present with him who seeks Me." Rābia prays, "O my Lord, the stars are shining and the eyes of men are closed and kings have shut their doors, and every lover is alone with his beloved, and here am I alone with Thee." This is what love for God means. The lover finds easy all that he does and is called upon to do for his Beloved. If his beloved can be pleased by any action, the lover will do it most gladly, however difficult and arduous the task may be. The lover is not even afraid of death, because death means "meeting with the Beloved face to face in the Abode of Peace". The body is only an obstacle to the person who is longing to meet the spirit and to have a vision of the spirit in its nakedness unveiled by any covering, and death only presents the opportunity to get rid of the obstacle. This is what Socrates, the great lover of Truth or Spirit, said while he was going to drink the cup of hemlock; he was only going to be united with the spirit which he had so long cherished as his goal. According to Al-Ghazali, the love of God is rooted in the knowledge and understanding of His nature, and the sufi lover is, therefore, also the gnostic. "True gnosis is to abandon this world and the next and to be set apart unto the Lord: it is to be intoxicated by the wine of Love and not to recover therefrom except in the vision of the Beloved, for the gnostic dwells in the light of his Lord." The gnostics differ in the degree of gnosis to which they attain. There is intuition, deep intuition, and deepest intuition, corresponding to *Sirr*, the secret, or as Nicholson translates it, consciousness, *Khāfi*, the hidden, and *Akhfā*, the deeply hidden. "He who has reached the end of the journey is listening at all times to the Divine voice; he has passed beyond the stations and is in the realm of achievement; he is unmoved by fears, and states affect him no longer. It is all one to him whether he suffers hardship or at ease, whether he has little or much, whether men do him wrong or keep faith with him, whether he eats or is hungry, whether he sleeps or wakes." This stage of perfection is, according to Al-Ghazali, the stage of the lover, for whom the perception of Beauty is a delight in itself and all beauty resides in the Absolute.

Sufism believes in the existence of different centres in the body which are the special organs of spiritual apprehension. These they call the *Lataif*. They correspond to the *cakras* in the Hindu system which also are believed to be special centres connected with spiritual realisation. The Hindus speak of six such centres and have attempted to locate them in particular parts of the body,—the *Mulādhāra* and *Svādisṭhāna* are placed below the navel, the *Manipura* in the navel, the *Anāhata* in the chest, the *Viśuddha* in the throat, the *Ājñā* in the forehead and the *Sahasrāra* in the upper brain. The sufis speak of five centres which they designate as *Qalb*, *Sirr*, *Ruḥ*, *Khāfi* and *Akhfā* to which if *Nafs* is added, here also the number becomes six. Although the exact location of the centres is not always unanimous, there is no difference of opinion regarding their location in the heart, in the chest, in the forehead and in the brain. The *Nafs* is placed under the navel, the *Qalb* in the left side, *Ruh* on the right side of the chest, *Sirr* exactly between *Qalb* and *Ruh*. *Khafi* is believed to be in the forehead and *Akhfā* in the brain. The aim of the sufi, like the Hindu Yogi, is to awaken each of the *Lata'ifs* and to pass from the lower to the higher centres gradually and receive through them *Tajalli* or divine Illumination. The constant practice of *dhikir* or remembrance of God is very helpful in the awakening of the centres. It is believed that the centres begin to be active when the *shayakh* transmits his spiritual energy to the *murid*. The disciple becomes conscious of the working of these centres, at least of the lower ones, when he is initiated by the spiritual guide.

The sufis speak of three journeys of the traveller in the Path—the journey *to* God, the journey *in* God and the journey *from* God. These expressions are very instructive and are helpful in removing some of the misapprehensions which usually find their place in connection with supra-personal religions. The journey *from* God gives a definite lie to the supposition of western scholars that there is no active mysticism in the East and that the Eastern mystics become absorbed in God and are lost to the world and do not serve the cause of humanity. This last stage is designated *sayr ani 'llah* or journey *from* God back to the world

of manifestation being fully equipped with the knowledge of Reality. He knows at first hand the entire scheme of the universe and when he comes back to the world he never mistakes the shadow for the reality. This is what is found in the Vedantic conception of the Jīvanmukta or the liberated. This is what is found in Plato also. Those who have attained knowledge and have seen Reality cannot and do not behave in the same way in the world as those who are lacking in knowledge and are guided by mere opinion. Sufism has expressed it clearly perhaps noticing by experience the misinterpretation that is likely to occur if the return movement is not stated as well. The journey *to* God merely means that the aspirant travels from the ' world of creation ' to the ' world of command ' and that there is an upward movement from the sphere of manifestation to the realm of the unmanifested Essence. The downward path consists in the stages of devolution traversed by the Absolute and is called by the sufis the *safarn'l Haqq* or the journey of Reality. The aspirant has to travel the corresponding upward path of evolution, stage by stage from the lower to the higher, and this is known as *safarn'l abd* or the journey of the creature. This upward movement " takes place in and through the unitive experience of the soul ". The second stage is the stage of resting in God when the aspirant remains absorbed in the Essence of God. From gnosis, the mystic has now passed to the union of the One Reality and has attained to the state of union which is the end of the quest. Al-Ghazali speaks exactly in the vein of the *Gītā* that when this state is attained the heart is filled with grace and joy unspeakable prevails, and it is felt that what has been attained is " above all else that can be attained ". How can he who understands only the love of sensible things, Al-Ghazali asks, believe in the joy of looking upon the Face of God Most High, who is without appearance or form, and understand that it is the greatest of all joys? But he who knows God knows that all joys are included in this joy.[1] The sufi can designate it as passing away into the unity, as *fanā fi'l-tawḥīd*, because as the aspirant sees only the

[1] *Ihyā*, IV, p. 289.

One, he cannot see himself; he has seen himself also in the One and has in a sense passed away from himself, his separative individuality, into the One. This is resting in God, this is residing in the Brāhmic consciousness, this is journey *in* God.

The journey *to* God is a very difficult journey. It has to be realised clearly at the outset that the journey is absolutely essential and has to be taken however hazardous it may be, if one is to fulfil the mission in one's life. It has got to be clearly seen that there is no other way for salvation; that the way of the flesh has got to be renounced for ever for the way of the spirit, and that there cannot be any compromise between the two and that God and Mammon cannot be served together. Once the need is felt keenly and the scheme visualised clearly the rest of the task becomes easy, easy not in the sense of being free from hazards and risks, trials and tribulations, toil and labour, but in the sense of being free from doubt and hesitation, from half-heartedness and impatience. The most difficult task becomes easy to one who undertakes it with a clear vision and devotes oneself to it whole-heartedly and entirely. The sufi mystic, at least Al-Ghazali, the best of them, knows the value of knowledge in producing emotion which leads to action, and is no advocate of blind faith. The traveller who undertakes the journey with full knowledge of its difficulties and its demands, replaces all that is evil in him by the good, acquires virtues and practises them in order to make them fixed habits, and purifies the soul so that it may free itself from the veils which hinder it from having direct access to God. God, on His part, does not remain idle and indifferent but assists the soul in its upward ascent by granting graces and illuminating the path when darkness seems to veil the eye. The traveller towards the end of his journey seems to smell the fragrance of the heavenly regions, to hear the Divine voices, and to feel the Divine presence round and about him. The 'Window' to the heavenly kingdom is now open and the spirit awake. Next, knowledge brings in Love. "Who knows God, loves Him." The strife is over, the soul becomes tranquil and attains its native and natural

state and has reached the summit. The Divine Beauty is revealed in its full splendour and there is " an attainment above all else that can be attained ". Something is realised which " the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, that which has not entered into the heart of man ". In this vision the mystic loses himself and passes into union with God and becomes united with God. Henceforth he lives his life in God and ceases to have any separative individuality.

Sufism gives us the description of the whole of the journey of the mystic traveller. We find here knowledge, feeling and action beautifully blended. We have in the sufi poets sublime descriptions of the stage of Love or Bhakti, absorption and resting in God. We have in the writings of Al-Ghazali and others unequivocal descriptions of the stage of union, of the stage that transcends all division and duality. But this is only for the ' esoteric ' or as Al-Ghazali puts it, only " for those who are fitted to receive them ". Sufism recognises fully that it is the mystical element in religion which is the most vital, that which makes religious life a reality. Sufism has all the elements that are needed to be regarded as a supra-personal religion and it has some essential points of similarity with Vedantism. Professor Nicholson's statement " The enraptured Sufi who has passed *beyond the illusion of subject and object* and broken through to the Oneness can either deny that he is anything or affirm that he is all things ", points out clearly the affinity of Sufism with Vedantism and practically uses the language of the Vedanta.

III

Taoism

Taoism is one of the three great Religions of China and Laotze is regarded as the acknowledged founder of the system. Recently, however, it has come to be believed that Laotze was only a distinguished teacher and transmitter of the Taoist doctrine existing from a long antiquity, as Confucius himself also acknowledged about his own system

that he was not a maker but only 'a transmitter' of the doctrines he was teaching. Laotze is beileved to be about fifty years older than Confucius, being born in 604 B.C. It is supposed that the earliest Taoism and Confucianism did not differ greatly from each other and that the divergences originated with their treatment in the hands of the famous teachers with whose names these are associated, Confucius being more of a moralist and social reformer and Laotze more of a metaphysician and mystic.

The 'Tao' most probably means 'Road' or 'Way' and there is hardly any doubt that when the 'Great Thu' is used synonymously with the 'Great Tao'[1] it means the Great Path or the Great Way. But it must be plainly admitted that the word has been used in such a wide significance that it is difficult to say what it does not mean. No description is adequate to express its nature. "Neither speech nor silence is sufficient to convey the notion of it. When we neither speak nor refrain from speech, our speculations about it reach their highest point."[2] It comprises everything and is beyond everything. It is 'acting without action,' is quiet and undemonstrative, free from motive and effort; perfectly spontaneous like the working of nature. This is sometimes called the Tao of Heaven or the Heavenly Tao as distinguished from the Tao of Man which shows 'will, purpose and effort' and which implies 'doing and being embarrassed thereby'. "Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is."[3] The Tao is nameless. It is the mother of all things. It is before heaven and earth. All second causes have their origin in the Tao. The Tao is perfectly uncaused. It is the cause of all things. It is still and formless, "standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted).[1] There is a beauitful passage which is also grand and sublime. "I do not know its name and I give it the designation of the Tao. Making an effort

[1] *Tao-Te-King*, XX, 3.
[2] *Writings of Kwangtye*, Bk. XXV, last paragraph.
[3] *Tao-Te-King*, XXV, 4.
[1] *Tao-Te-King*, XXV, 1.

to give it a name I call it The Great. Great it passes on. Passing on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns. Therefore the Tao is great; Heaven is great, Earth is great; and the (sage) king is also great. In the universe there are four things that are great and the (sage) king is one of them."[2] The Tao that has no name but the Great seems to be identical with the Brahman of the Vedanta, which also signifies the Great, the Bhūmā, the Infinite that has no limitation or smallness. It is all-pervading and is everywhere. It is the home and reconciliation of all opposites and contraries. It is unchanging and still, but still it passes on. It becomes remote but again it returns. It is far as well as near: It is *dūrasthamantike ca tat.* It encompasses the Heaven and the earth and goes beyond them. The Tao may be likened to the That or the 'Tat'. It is that which is everything and transcends all things. The ultimate reference beyond which there is nothing, the unmoved mover or the uncaused cause, the Mother of all things from which everything emanates, the formless that gives rise to all forms, the actionless that is the source of all actions, the not-doing that is all-doing, the sublime stillness that is beyond silence and dynamis, that is beyond rest and activity, the perfect spontaneity that is beyond will and effort, volition and striving, is the Tao or the Tat. It is not short of personality but it transcends personality. It is supra-personal and not infra-personal, because intelligence, love and wisdom, benevloence and righteousness, personal will and volition, all appear when the original condition of the Tao is lost. Personality rises out of this supra-personal stage and as Taoism has everywhere sought to make it clear in explaining the nature of the Tao, it undoubtedly secures its place amongst the supra-personal religions. "Thus it was when the Tao was lost, its attributes appeared; when its attributes were lost, benevolence appeared; when benevolence was lost, righteousness appeared; and when righteousness was lost, the proprieties appeared."[1] What a great fall is recorded as there is gradual passing from the perfect spontaneity of the Tao to

[2] *Ibid.*, paragraphs 2 and 3.
[1] Part II, XXXVIII, 5.

the external observance of proprieties, from reality to appearance, from the solid fruit to only a flower! as Laotze puts it. The Tao is the *guṇātīta* of the Vedanta, that which transcends all attributes and is the prius of the stage of attributes. The personal God possesses the attributes and although equipped with all that is best and highest, falls short of the stage of the Tao where even the inherent division implied in the conception of attributes between the attributes and their possessor, is transcended. This is exactly what the Vedanta means when it holds that Brahman is *jñānam*, conscoiusness itself, and not the possessor of *jñānam*, that it is the spirit which is all-consciousness, and not that which *has* consciousness, suggesting a substratum in which consciousness resides and, as such, being different from consciousness can only become *jaḍa* or not-conscious. Any division at this stage implies that a foreign factor, something other than pure consciousness or spirit has been unconsciously introduced. This is why the Vedanta rigidly sticks to its conception of divisionless *cit* and relentlessly fights against any attempt at introducing any form of division. Taoism also is very careful to say that the Tao is not One but that it produced the One,[1] and that the One produced Two, and Two produced Three and Three produced all things. The Tao is not the One that produces the Two, but is beyond all numerical valuation, beyond all quantitative measurement, beyond space, time and causality.

Exactly in the vein of the Upanishads, Laotze says that the (sage) king, or one who realises the Tao is also Great, that one who realises Brahman becomes Brahman. To comprehend the Tao, the Highest or the ultimate Reality, is to fulfil the mission of one's life and none who has not attained Greatness can realise the Great Tao. One who has not passed beyond the realm of the Attributes, one who has not passed beyond the realm of duality and division, one who has not realised the divisionless Infinite and the All-pervading Reality can comprehend the Tao. It is, therefore, rightly said that the Tao is great and the Sage or the King who has realised the Tao is also great. As it is a matter of knowledge

[1] Part II, Ch. XLII, 1.

or comprehension, realisation is not possible from a distance, and one must become Brahman if one is to know Brahman, one must attain the level which one seeks to comprehend. It is not knowledge by the understanding, not a theoretical outline or survey merely but direct realisation that is in view here. We have a passage in the *Tao Teh King* which seems to be an exact translation of Upanishadic texts: "To know and yet (think) we do not know is the highest (attainment); not to know (and yet think) we do know is a disease."[1] In the writings of Kwangtze,[2] we have another passage: "How do you know that when I say 'I know it' I really (am showing that) I do not know it, and that when I say 'I do not know it' I really am showing that I do know it?" The Upanishads state similarly that he who thinks he knows it, knows it not; he who, on the other hand, thinks he does not know it, knows it truly; it is known to those who think they know it not, and remains unknown to those who think they have known it—*avijñātam vijānatām vijñātamvijānatām*. There is no doubt that the *Tao Teh King* and the Upanishads are thinking of a realisation that transcends mere intellectual knowledge and definitely hinting at a stage where it is perceived clearly that the realisation eludes the grasp of the discursive intellect and cannot be comprehended by it. He who thinks that the intellectual knowledge is the whole of it misses it entirely; he who, on the other hand, perceives clearly that the intelect cannot comprehend it and that it is beyond intellectual knowledge realises its transcendent nature. The *Tao Teh King* is fond of expressing the nature of the Tao by means of contraries and contradictories and, like the Upanishads, employs this device in order to describe the Indescribable. The contradictories lead the mind to think of something beyond them and look up to something where the contradiction is resolved. It is definitely stated that "the movement of the Tao by contraries proceeds", and Laotze quotes some sentence-makers saying:

[1] Ch. LXXI, para. 1.
[2] Part 1, Sec. II, para. 8.

"The Tao when brightest seen, seems light to lack;
Who progress in it makes, seems drawing back;
Loud is its sound, but never word it said;
A semblance great, the shadow of a shade."

The 'light' here spoken of evidently is the light of mere intelligence; and 'progress' as applied to the Absolute becomes unmeaning. It proclaims itself loudly and reveals itself clearly in silence; it is beyond the opposition of silence and dynamis, rest and motion. Scholars of the highest class, when they hear about the Tao, earnestly carry it into practice; scholars of the lowest class, when they have heard about it, laugh greatly at it. If it were not (thus) laughed at, it would not be fit to be the Tao. Men of feeble understanding cannot form a conception of the Highest Reality which solves all opposition and reconciles all contradiction, and the only alternative left to them is to dismiss it as an empty abstraction or as an unreal chimera. Those, on the other hand, whose intellects are very subtle and who possess high powers of comprehension at once understand the sublimity of the conception and engage themselves in realising it in life with all their hearts. The *Bhagavadgītā* rightly says, "It seems to be incomprehensible because of its extreme subtlety", and is, in the language of the *Upanishads*, realisable only by the most penetrating intellect (agryā buddhi). Laotze says, "we look at it and we do not see it, and we name it 'the Equable'. We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it 'the Inaudible.' We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we name it 'the Subtle'. With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain the One." [1]

The Tao is all-pervading. "It may be found on the left hand and on the right." This description is similar to the description of the Bhūmā in the Chāndogya Upanishad. There is nothing before the Tao. "I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God. The Tao in its regular course does nothing, and so there is

[1] *Tao-Te-king*, XIV, 1

nothing which it does not do." The Tao is absolute simplicity. He who has in himself abundantly the attributes (of the Tao) is like an infant. The wise man is like the infant, like the mad man, like the man who does not observe rules of cleanliness and propriety, *unmattavat bālavat piśācavat*, say the Hindu scriptures. The essential point underlying the description is that there is a return to the stage of absolute simplicity and perfect spontaneity undisturbed by any consideration of any social restraint. Great emphasis has been laid in Taoism on the state of perfect harmony and ease which is free from strife and division, from all disturbance and turmoil, and this has been described as the secret of the Tao which gives to its followers long life and care-free existence. Taoism thinks that the life of intelligence and wisdom introduces artificiality and division in the perfectly simple state of Tao, and, therefore, much learning is to be avoided. "Watch over what is within you, shut up the avenues that connect you with what is external, much knowledge is pernicious." [1] The essence of the perfect Tao is surrounded with the deepest obscurity; its highest reach is in darkness and silence. "You must be still, you must be pure, not subjecting your body to toil, not agitating your vital force—then you may live for long. When your eyes see nothing, your ears hear nothing, and your mind knows nothing, your spirit will keep your body, and the body will live long." This returning to the original simplicity of the Tao has sometimes been described as returning to the root. "This returning to their root", Laotze says, "is what we call the state of stillness; and the stillness may be called a reporting that they have fulfilled their appointed end." [2] The state of strife and division is an intermediate stage; the beginning is in the state of the divisionless Tao, and again, when there is a return to that original state there is the cessation of all movement, there is the fulfilment of the mission, and all strife is at an end.

[1] *The Writings of Kwang-tze*, Part II, Sec. IV, para. 4.
[2] *Tao Te-king*, XVI, 1.

There is not the least doubt that the Tao is the condition of the highest harmony and where there is perfect adjustment of all rival claims. Laotze says,

> " To him by whom this harmony is known,
> (The secret of) the unchanging (Tao) is shown,
> And in the knowledge wisdom finds its throne." [1]

This harmony once attained is never lost. It is the highest synthesis that has got no antithesis to it and is above death and destruction. For him who has attained this supreme harmony, " The rhinoceros finds no place in him into which to thrust its horn nor the tiger a place in which to fix its claws, nor the weapon a place to admit its point. And for what reason? Because there is in him no place of death." [2] Because he has realised the essence of his existence, because he has realised the spirit or the soul in him, the weapons cannot touch him, the waters cannot drown him, the air cannot dry him up. These instruments of destruction are only competent to destroy the body; they cannot touch the soul. When Hui reported to his Master that he was making progress, the latter asked him what he did mean by that. Hui replied " I sit and forget everything, My connection with the body and its parts is dissolved; my perceptive organs are discarded. Thus leaving my material form, and bidding farewell to my knowledge, I am become one with the Great Pervader." [3] Here we find a clear and unambiguous description of the realisation of the Absolute Spirit and of the attainment of the Perfect Harmony or the Tao. The man who has attained this state " sees where there is the deepest obscurity; he hears where there is no sound. In the midst of the deepest obscurity, he alone sees and can distinguish; in the midst of a soundless (abyss) he alone can hear a harmony (of notes). While he is always hurrying forth, he yet returns to his resting place; now large, now small, now long, now short; now distant, now near ". He is wide-

[4] Part II, Ch. LV, para. 3.
[2] *Tao-Te-king*, LI, 4.
[3] *The Writings of Kwang-tze*, I, VI, 14.

awake in the midst of deep sleep—*Jāgarti suṣuptisthaḥ* and enjoys perfect rest while acting ceaselessly. This is the state of supreme Harmony and Perfect Balance. In this state " the sage is entirely restful and (his mind) is evenly balanced and at ease. This even balance and ease appears in his placidity and indifference. In this state of even balance and ease, of placidity and indifference anxieties and evils do not find access to him, no depraving influence can take him by surprise; his virtue is complete, and his spirit continues unimpaired." A great nameless teacher of the Tao summed up its teaching saying, " Let your mind find its enjoyment in pure simplicity; blend yourself with (the primary) ether in idle indifference; allow all things to take their natural course; and admit no personal or selfish consideration : do this and the world will be governed ".

The Tao is above all duality and description. " The Tao that is displayed is not the Tao. Words that are argumentative do not reach the point. Benevolence that is constantly exercised does not accomplish its object. Disinterestedness that vaunts its purity is not genuine. Courage that is most stubborn is ineffectual. These five seem to be round (and complete) but they tend to become square (and immovable). Therefore the knowledge that stops at what it does not know is the greatest. Who knows the argument that needs no words, and the way that is not trodden? He who is able to know this has what is called the 'Heavenly Treasure House'. He may pour into it without its being filled; he may pour from it without its being exhausted." [1] The Tao is beyond words, beyond ordinary knowledge and reveals itself only when one stops at what one does not know. It is above all quantitative measurement,—it does not increase by additions of quantity nor decrease by subtraction. It remains full and entire, *pūrṇa*, as the Upanishads put it, although the whole may be taken out of it. Addition and subtraction apply only to things admitting of quantitative measurements and are wholly inapplicable to the spirit which, having no touch of matter,

[1] *The Writings of Kwang-tze*, Bk. II, Pt. I, Sec. II, para. 7.

does not admit of quantitative variation at all. "The Perfect Tao is something inexhaustible and yet men all think it has an end; it is something unfathomable, and yet men all think its extreme limit can be reached." Taoism thinks that the inexhaustibility and the unfathomability of the Tao can be realised only if a person can set his spirit free and be still as if he had no soul and can consciously 'return to the root'. This 'returning to the root' is a very important expression in Taoism and signifies the highest stage of attainment; the stage of original simplicity and primordial Identity and oneness that is above and before all division and difference.

"In the Grand Beginning (of all things) there was nothing in all the vacancy of space; there was nothing that could be named. It was in this state that there arose the first existence; the first existence, but still without bodily shape." The nameless Tao, the ultimate Reality, is prior to all things, prior even to the first existence. The first existence has no bodily shape, but a division takes place within it. This internal division is the source of all creation. This account follows exactly what is stated in the Upanishads. There was no name, no form but only Being, *Sat*, before the creation of this world. The division between the subject and the object, the *aham* and the *idam* is at the root of the creation of all bodily forms. The first existence is constituted of *samkalpa* or will only and has got no bodily shape. The ultimate Reality is beyond will and intelligence, beyond division and duality, beyond the first existence or the One. The division is only an event, a temporary happening and not the inherent nature of the Reality. As the ultimate Reality is not in time, the division that appears is strictly speaking not even an event, but an appearance, a superimposition. This characterisation of the ultimate Reality as beyond all division and difference is what entitles Taoism to be ranked with supra-personal religions. "When the Nature has been cultivated, it returns to its proper character; and when that has been fully reached, there is the same condition as at the beginning. That sameness is pure vacancy and the vacancy is great. It is like the closing of the beak and silencing the singing (of a bird). That closing

and silencing is like the union of heaven and earth." [1] This returning to the primordial simplicity, this union of heaven and earth, this mysterious quality is what is meant by the Tao. When there is a scheming mind in the breast, its pure simplicity is impaired, the spirit becomes unsettled, and the unsettled spirit is not the proper residence of the Tao.[2] The excellence of the mind lies in its "Abysmal stillness". In the deep stillness of the mind, the spirit finds its clear reflection because of the depth as well as of the transparency. The Taoist teacher has made great use of the analogy of water. "The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefitting all things and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary) the low place which all men dislike. Hence (its way) is near to (that of) the Tao." [3] The Vaiṣṇava speaks of the humbleness of the grass which allows itself to be trodden by all and of the forbearance of the tree which bestows its shade even to one who comes to uproot it and absorbs all heat and cold itself in order to benefit all those who take shelter under it. The Taoist teacher asks all to follow the example of water which is contented with always taking the low place. Water cleanses all impurities and in its pure state becomes fit for taking correct reflections. The heart is to be made as pure as transparent water and is to be taught humility as is found in water at all times. Water is also a 'perfect level' and the greatest artificer takes his rule from it. Such is the clearness of still water and infinitely greater is that of the human spirit. "The still mind of the sage is the mirror of heaven and earth, the glass of all things." Vacancy, stillness, placidity, tastelessness, quietude, silence and non-action, these constitute the perfection of the Tao and its characteristics. They who have the clear understanding of the Great Root or the Great Origin are in harmony with Heaven and they are those who are in harmony with men. Those who have not experienced the harmony here have no chance of having it hereafter. The Tao is to be realised here in this life while holding this bodily frame; it is foolish

[1] *The Writings of Kwang-tse*, Bk. XII, Pt. II, Sec. V, para. 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, para. 11.
[3] *Tao Te King*, Part I, VIII, 1.

to think that the realisation will come after one departs from this body. As soon as the soul leaves the body, the chance for the realisation of the harmony is lost. The disharmony sets in when the soul gets itself connected with the body and it is while the body persists that the disharmony is to be overcome and harmony established.

In a passage in Kwang-tze's writings, it is clearly stated that the Tao is before Heaven and Earth and before God. " Before there were Heaven and Earth, from of old, there It was, securely existing. From it came the mysterious existence of spirits, from it the mysterious existence of *Ti* (God) ". The Tao transcends everything that can be thought of or that can be described. There is the great statement of Laotze : " The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the ending and unchanging name. There is everywhere the indication that the Tao is, like the Upanishadic Brahman, the transcendent Reality that is indescribable and can only be hinted at through contradictory statements. It is rightly said that the wise do not speak and those who speak are not wise. The perfect man, having been fixed in the Tao penetrates to the truth of things and can always stick to that which is fundamental. Heaven and Earth are ' external to him ' and he views all things with indifference. He wields the handle of power over the whole world, and yet it is nothing to him and is not sufficient to embarrass him. The ease and simplicity, the sponteneity and freedom, the absence of all artificiality and scheming, the perfect naturalness and the wide comprehensiveness seem to be the real characteristics of the Tao. " The Tao does not exhaust itself in what is greatest nor is it ever absent from what is least. The Tao cannot be taught and cannot be handed down by the father to the son. It has got to be realised by every man for himself. It is something more than what can be conveyed by words, more than what can be shown by outward movements. Laotze says that the reason why the Tao cannot be transmitted is this, " that if, within, there be not the presiding principle, it will not remain there, and if, outwardly, there be not the correct obedience, it will not be carried out." If there is not the proper reception by

the mind to which it is given, the sage does not give it out. Laotze once said to Confucius, " If you get the Tao, there is no effect that cannot be produced; if you miss it, there is no effect that can." This statement leaves no doubt that the Tao is the highest centre, the ultimate Reality, the key which governs and regulates all things, and that it is something that has got to be experienced directly and has to be realised in practice.

The Tao is regarded by some only as a method of prolonging life. But although there are definite statements in many places that the Tao is a means of securing longevity, there are other statements which show beyond doubt that it will be doing great injustice to Taoism if the Tao is considered to be confined to achieving that only. It is quite consistent to suppose that the Tao which, when attained, leaves nothing else to be attained, should include longevity also among its achievements. The description of the man who knows the Tao as ' the noblest man under heaven ', as one ' who cannot be treated familiarly or distantly ', as " beyond all consideration of profit or injury, of nobility or meanness ", as the person ' to whom all the dignities of a state are as nothing ', as one ' who has what is the greatest riches ' and to whom 'all the wealth of a state is as nothing', as one " who has all that he could wish and to whom fame and praise are as nothing ", does not fit in with the theory that Taoism teaches only the way to prolong one's bodily existence. If we are to attempt a consistent and correct estimate of the Tao, we should take it to be the ultimate Reality, that is before God, before Heaven and Earth, that produces all things and transcends all things, that admits of no substitute and is *ekamevādvitīyam*, just as the vedantic Brahman is.

Laotze speaks of the ' three precious things ' which he prizes most. The first is gentleness; the second is economy; and the third is shrinking from taking precedence of others. " With that gentleness I can be bold; with that economy I can be liberal; shrinking from taking precedence of others, I can become a vessel of the highest honour." [1] Although,

[1] *Tao Te King*, Ch. LXVII, 3.

in this passage, Laotze speaks of the three Jewels in these terms and gives a very high place to these qualities, still these are not to be regarded as the characteristics of the Tao. These are only qualities that prepare one for the Tao and are not to be supposed as characterising the Tao. In many places, Laotze says that when the Tao disappears, the Attributes appear; when the perfect spontaneity of the Tao no longer persists, Benevolence and Righteousness take possession of the field. There is the repeated instruction to return to the root and to rise above all artificiality. Sometimes there is even the instruction to renounce wisdom and to go back to primordial simplicity. " If we could renounce our sageness and discard our wisdom, it would be better for the people a hundredfold. If we could renounce our benevolence and discard our righteousness, the people would again become filial and kindly. If we would renounce our artful contrivances and discard our (scheming for) gain, there would be no thieves nor robbers ".[1] The rulers that are established in the perfect Tao are competent to govern without any difficulty. He who has attained perfect Harmony can establish harmony everywhere without the least movement on his part. Everything goes on in perfect harmony spontaneously. The wonderful results that are stated to follow from the attainment of the Tao are not mere fancy, however difficult it may be for the westerner to accept it. " Everything is known, when Brahman is known", the Upanishads say. There is no difficulty in believing that if there is contact with the ultimate Reality which is the source of all things, all sorts of effects can follow. It ought not to startle the reader if it is said that "poisonous insects will not bite him; fierce beasts will not seize him, birds of prey will not strike him." [2] Is it much if it is said of the Creator? If it is not, why should it be thought to be much for the Tao which is even before the Creator? The Tao is All and yet transcends the All; it is immanent as well as transcendent. As the Tao is stated to be above God, it has every claim to be ranked amongst the supra-personal religions.

[1] *Tao Te King*, Ch. XIX, 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, XXV, 1.

LECTURE VIII

RELIGIONS AND RELIGION: THE ONE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

There are so many religions in this universe but no religion. There is a plurality of faiths differing from one another but there is no religion which is universal and one. In the hopeless conflict of religions, religion that is quest for the Eternal and the True seems to be not only in the background but to be almost absent, and a considerable section has begun to think seriously, in utter disappointment, whether it is not time to abandon the cult of religion if, instead of promoting love and sympathy, fellow-feeling and concord, it sows seeds of distrust and suspicion, of hatred and discord. If the experiment of thousands of years has resulted in the race for inventing the most powerful atom-bomb and other weapons of destruction, if in the name of the League of Nations or United Nations Organisation, each nation is trying to secure not the welfare of the world but only its own prosperity, if God is even now to the world a mere name or a word having no reality corresponding to it, if His Presence is only to be admitted as a postulate and never to be felt, if religion is nothing but dogma and superstition, is it not high time to dismiss the show and free men from bondage and suffering? Science is achieving marvellous results in its field of enquiry and establishing laws and discovering unity in the midst of diversity. Why should not religion, it is asked, make any progress if there is anything real in its supposition? Science is discovering truths which are accepted by all; is it too much to expect that religion should also discover something which will be acceptable to all and which would end all conflict in the sphere of religion? Is the day near when 'religions' would be supplanted by 'religion' and a world-faith would be established which would rise above all particularity, all partisan spirit, and see beyond local limitations and vested interests? Or, is it an empty dream?

In one sense, religion is universal and one, and the particularities, dogmas of religions, have nothing to do with

the essence of religion. In each of the religions, the universal religion is working and we have only to find out the essential and the fundamental element. There is no need for any special world-faith to work as the universal religion. Religion, properly understood, is nothing if it is not universal, and our search for a world-religion should be directed to find out the truth of religion itself which, when disocvered, will reveal itself to be the one universal religion which has been the cherished dream of many visionaries. We shall attempt to see that there is something wrong in the demand for a universal religion which will obliterate all particular religions, and that there is no conflict between the universal and the particular elements in religion.

Religion is a thing which cannot be dismissed so easily as is supposed. It is inherent in the constitution of the human being. It belongs to the psychology of human beings. It is a passion, a craving, a desire for something universal, a longing for the infinite which will explain the mystery of the infinite, a striving towards reaching something which will solve the riddle of having the idea of the infinite in a finite frame. Man has been endowed with a vague sense of the infinite; he has been given a glimpse of the infinite brightness which, though he does not remember it exactly, is still in his sub-conscious mind, and which rejects everything as dark and dull, contrasted with itself. Although man is baffled in his attempts and although he is disappointed in most quarters, he has been given a strange confidence and a never-failing hope which invite him to undertake the gigantic task and solve the riddle. This hope, this confidence, in the midst of failures and disappointments, is the most significant thing in religion and explains much of its constituent elements.

The success or failure of religion also cannot be judged in the ordinary way. The object of religion, though universal, is to be realised by each individual in the inmost recesses of his heart, and the experience is a private, a very secret attainment which is also the dearest and the most sublime possession of the individual. God is not an object like external objects and the vision of God does not benefit the seer in any way if He is seen only as an external object. God is not only *in* all objects of the universe but *is* those very

objects. If the mere sight of God would have been of any avail, our daily behaviour and dealings with worldly objects would have bestowed on us the benefit of the vision of God. One who thinks that the purpose of religion is to see God as an external object has surely misunderstood the whole thing. If one thinks that God is to be discovered as an external fact and that the aim of religion and science is the same one has missed the essence of religion. God is the embodiment of all values, the personification of all ideals, the concrete presentation of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The realisation of Truth, the clear and distinct perception of it as a reality and not as a distant ideal, or the realisation of Goodness as a concrete Presence, as a definite and distinct Reality as distinguished from a mere ideal, is something very different from the perception of an external object as a fact. The perception of values is something different from the perception of facts, and the realisation of the Absolute value is something unique. The contention of the common man or of the scientist that it has not been possible for religion as yet to show God as a fact to all and that consequently religion has failed in its task reminds one of the story of Lallande who swept the whole heavens with his telescope and declared that there was no God after having failed to notice Him there. We should remember here that a greater astronomer looking at the starry heavens exclaimed 'O God'. That shows the difference between science and religion or between science and philosophy. The same starry heavens reveal God to one and hide Him from another; one perceives the value, the other wants to perceive the external fact. From the standpoint of the narrow scientist sublime philosophy is idle speculation, religion a myth and priestcraft, and only matter and material objects are real. Morality also ought to be a delusion, according to him, because this also cannot stand the test of the telescope and the microscope. If he does not say it in so many words, it follows from his contention that Truth, Beauty, Goodness and all values are fictions of the brain. We have to guard ourselves, in judging the truth of religion, that we may not fall into the snare of the scientist and unconsciously or subconsciously adopt his standard or criterion of truth. If we think of the nature of religion, we

shall find that it has not failed to achieve its mission and that the records of thousands of years are not the false statements of liars and hypocrites. Religion is belief in and realisation of the kingdom of the spirit. The voice of the spirit has been unmistakably heard, the possessions of the flesh have been unhesitatingly left behind, the pleasures of the senses have been joyfully abandoned, by not a few souls in distant times amongst favoured nations in particular places, but the flute of Krishṇa is still calling incessantly his devotees, and even up to the present day men are leaving their hearth and homes in obedience to the call. God is not a thing of hoary antiquity whom it is time to be forgotten nor an unverifiable and unmeaning hypothesis which it is high time to overthrow, but is experienced as a living reality, nay, as the most real of all reals, daily by thousands of souls in their heart of hearts amongst all nations and in all climes even now. The kingdom of the spirit is not the vain dream of visionaries but is being realised every day by fortunate souls, and there is not the slightest doubt or suspicion about the efficacy of religion. The experiment of thousands of years has not proved a failure but has stood the test admirably well. The religious souls all over the world are still singing the glory of God not because of what He was to their forefathers, not because of what is recorded of Him in the sacred Texts but because of what He is revealing of Him in the inmost recesses of their hearts. The 'show' would not and could not have continued if religion only *promised* but never *fulfilled* the promise. The ongoing process is sustained by success and attainment and the entire unbroken line of teachers supposed directly to transmit the realisation to the fit disciples from generation to generation confirms the supposition. The Eternal is not a supposition but a certainty, and though it cannot be as clear to the ordinary man as the stone or as the tree it cannot be altogether omitted from the life of the human being. Man would not have been man, had he not the sense of the Eternal in him. The sense of the Eternal is not clear in him, it is true, but this is also because he is man. Man is not all-divine, and it is because of the element of animality in him, that the sense of the Eternal is not very clear in him. When the divinity in man becomes more and more manifest

and when his lower nature or animality gets more and more eliminated, the Eternal shines more and more brightly and ultimately man becomes identical with the Divine and the Eternal.

If materialism is true, religion certainly goes. If religion is judged by the standard of material things, it does not find anything by which to establish itself. But man cannot be supposed to be nothing but matter. I think it is Shelly who says that he is discontented with materialism because he cannot give his assent to a theory which does not find in man a ' being with aspirations '; a being with a ' before ' and an ' after '. The sense of the spirit is inherent in man, and religion, in making him alive to this sense, forms an essential element in the constitution of the human being. Religion is no failure if it is judged as the realisation of the kingdom of the spirit; it is bound to be declared useless and unprofitable if it is judged by the standard of worldly values. Christ Jesus is a failure if he is to be judged by the criterion of the world. His crucification and the victory of his enemies show that he is not the son of God or that God is not the King of Heaven. Socrates, in proclaiming the supremacy of the spirit, had to drink hemlock. The victory of his enemies proved that Socrates was in the wrong. If righteousness does not triumph, if the spirit is not victorious over sense, who would believe that there is any truth in religion? But is it true? Is the truth of religion to be tested by its success in the world, by the gains and losses in the material universe? Does not the spirit of man proclaim the victory of Christ Jesus and condemn the crucifiers? Does not the soul in man glorify Socrates and bow down to him in reverent admiration, and condemn his judges? The challenge of science does not touch religion in the least. The conversion of many sinners into saints, the thorough change in the life of many an ordinary man, is the answer of religion to the challenge. The suffering of the pious, the poverty of the religious soul, the want of material prosperity of the seeker of God, is not only no impediment in the belief in God, but supplies direct evidence of the supremacy of the spirit and its domination over the body. Penance and self-control have also the same end in view. That the soul is the master and not the body,

that the pleasures of the sense are as nothing compared with the bliss that the soul enjoys is what is directly realised by the practice of penance. The Eternal, the kingdom of the spirit, is what is sought to be realised by religion, and it has got to be felt that the spirit desires something higher than the demands of the flesh.

It is to be remembered that the success of religion can hardly be tested by external results. The existence of envy and hatred, mistrust and suspicion, the absence of love and fellow-feeling, of compassion and pity, in a large scale or in a wholesale and universal measure does not prove the failure of religion. The created world is a variety where everything is not of the same kind, where everything is not and cannot be good. If it is all goodness and no evil, it is no creation. If creation serves any purpose, it shows the conquest of goodness over evil which must exist in order to be conquered. Hatred and envy must have a place in creation by the side of love and compassion, and if we do not find love everywhere it only shows that the purpose of creation is being worked out. But the religious soul must be filled with love; hatred and jealousy should find no place in his heart. In his eyes, everything is good, there is no evil anywhere. Whatever happens follows strictly the will of God, and what is ordained by God is perfectly good. Something may appear to be evil, to be contrary to our end and our desires, but our knowledge is imperfect and partial, and we know very little of the cosmic end. What seems to be evil from a partial standpoint may be not only good when seen from the standpoint of the totality but may be realised to be perfectly adjusted to the scheme of the universe and to be absolutely necessary. *Good* and *evil* are terms that have reference to partial and special ends; they lose all significance when applied to the Absolute. What is part of the absolute order of things is necessary and as such is perfect. Everything, being necessarily grounded in the Absolute, is an object of love, is to be welcomed. Nothing that happens, nothing that appears in the order of things, can be despised, can be rejected. Being necessary parts of the absolute order, all are equally indispensable, all are equally worthy. There is no room for hatred, no room for

partiality, no room for attraction and repulsion, in such a view. One who has a vision of the absolute order of things, one who finds God as the ground of all things and beings, one who realises God as pervading the entire universe, cannot but be filled with love. This ' love ' is not an ordinary emotion as is found in worldly beings, but is ' intellectual love of God ' as Spinoza puts it. It makes no distinction between persons and persons, between birds and beasts, between stones and trees, but places all of them on a par and views them as necessarily grounded in and following from the Eternal order of things. This love that is the sublime possession of religious souls is not to be found anywhere and everywhere, but is, by the very nature of the case, bound to be rare. It implies the rising to a state of knowledge which is above the level of the intellect and is not to be expected amongst common men. It is only a few fortunate souls that are favoured with this high apprehension and this knowledge and this love can hardly be verified by any external criterion which always falls short of the required level. It is not to be supposed that if religion is true, every man in this universe is to be filled with love and compassion, and that the baser elements in human nature are to be completely eliminated. There never was a time, when this was the case, nor will ever there be one when this will happen. The world can hardly be expected to be flowing with love and compassion, and if this ever happens, it will mean the end of this creation. The evil and discord, duality and difference, which characterise the universe, will disappear only for the souls who have understood the scheme of the universe, only for those who have penetrated behind the surface and have seen the Indivisible and unchanging One pervading the world, but will continue to exist for others who have not been able to acquire that knowledge and have that realisation. The Yoga Sutra, *Kṛtārtham prati naṣṭamapi anaṣṭam tadanyasādhāranatvāt* clearly states this. There is end of the discord and the disharmony only for the soul who has realised the Truth and not for all. The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of the Spirit become established in the heart and not in the world for the people at large. Each individual is to realise it for himself, is to

feel it in his inner consciousness, in the inmost depths of his heart, and if he searches for it outside he is sure to be disappointed.

The question as to whether there should be one universal religion supplanting all particular religions has been engaging the attention of many thinkers in the present day. The conflict of religions, war and bloodshed in the name of religion, impediment in the way of unity because of division into different religious folds, are the reasons adduced in favour of the establishment of a world-faith. There have been interested parties who are attempting to utilise this opportunity to raise their own religions to the status of the universal religion. Each one of the great religions wants to prove to the world that it alone has the greatest claim to be accepted as the universal religion, and that it is above all sectarianism and partisan spirit and that it transcends narrow local limitations. This is the conception of one universal religion to many theologians and bigoted believers. If all become converts to Christianity and are actuated by its noble ideal, and if all follow this religion of love, the evil arising out of a variety of faiths will end, and the world will be a fit place for the establishment of the kingdom of God, many devout missionaries seriously think. Many sincere Muslims also think similarly that as Muhammad is the last prophet all ultimately will have to come under the banner of Islam and the sooner this is done, it will be better for the world to come under the church of one universal religion. Buddhism thinks that as it is a religion without any dogma and is founded on universal principles, as it is a religion without God, it alone has the valid title to be regarded as the world-faith and the followers of all religions can accept Buddhism as their creed without any difficulty.

Others think that the universal religion will be not any particular religion,—Christianity, Buddhism or Islam,—but the religion that will be free from all particularity, from all local colouring, that will have no special prophet, no special revelation, no special dogma, no particular church or particular creed, but will be a world-faith which will be acceptable to all men belonging to different religions and which will bring all men together into an indissoluble unity. It

is to be seriously considered whether such a religion will be different from philosophy, and whether the God of this universal religion will not be identical with the Absolute of Philosophy. Religion, isolated from all particularities, from all local colourings, is not what is ordinarily understood by religion and cannot serve the purpose of the religion of the common man. Such colourless religion will hardly be able to attract people, and a religion devoid of enthusiasm and fervour, is not worth the name.

A synthesis of different religions also cannot be expected to serve the purpose. Every religion has a special form which has its own value, and a doctrine or a creed, however valuable and important it may be as a constituent element of a particular religion, loses its significance when it is dissociated from its context and is made to fit in with the doctrines of a different religion. The best things in all religions when aggregated together may not only not be the best religion, but is most likely to be the worst, if it be any religion at all. What seems only the outer husk in contrast with the essence or the kernel is not really unimportant and refuse matter, but is the insulatory and protective covering that saves the kernel from destruction. It is only in the midst of the local colouring, in the context of the historical event in which a religion has arisen, and in the surroundings in which it has grown and developed, that a religion can hope to live and has the chance of being understood and followed. When these are eliminated in the search for a universal religion or when the best elements are sought to be isolated to the neglect of these seemingly unimportant and irrelevant details, the essence is thrown away along with the refuse and what is left is only a dead phantom, an empty abstraction, an unreal shadow.

Sometimes an attempt is made to find out the common elements in the different religions and it is supposed that emphasis on these common elements by a study of comparative religion will reveal the essence of religion and in this manner the way to the universal religion may be discovered. It is a false notion. What is common to the highest and the lowest is only the lowest, and if we are to retain only the common elements in the different religions as essential,

we are sure to miss the most important things that are revealed in and through the higher religions. The sublime experience of union with the Godhead, the 'flight of the Alone to the Alone' and the enjoyment of Incomparable and Unspeakable Bliss, do not find place in many religions. Are these to be excluded from the universal religion merely on the ground of their being not the general property of all religions?

What exactly is meant by the demand for a universal religion? Do we merely want to omit particularities and local characters of the different religions? In that case the so-called universal religion will be no religion at all. If the so-called living religions have no life in them, if they require life to be infused into them and if this be the most urgent need at the present time, the universal religion that is visualised as emerging out of the elimination of the particularities, will be an entirely dead thing, a bare formula, a lifeless abstraction, and the remedy proposed will kill the patient outright. The common man has lost the zest for religion, has ceased to take any interest in religion and does not occupy himself with it. What is needed at the present moment is not an extra-liberality, which is almost identical with callousness and indifference, but an earnestness and sincerity of belief. ' All religions are true ', is almost synonymous with ' No religion is true ' or ' Religion is not true '. One is to see the truth of one's religion for oneself, one is to realise the Eternal within by proceeding along the lines prescribed by one's religion, and then to declare that if others can also realise the Eternal by other methods, they also are possibly right. We find in St. John's Gospel, " No man cometh unto the Father but by me ". It expresses a significant truth. The way of righteousness is the way to reach God. The righteousness as embodied in Christ Jesus, the word made flesh in the son of God, the identity of the Father and the Son, the truth underlying the Son of God, the principle of Christianity as interpreted in the Gospel of John, make it abundantly clear what the expression means. A definite way is known to Apostle John and he speaks of that particular way. " There is no other way "—*Nānya panthāh*—has been spoken of by the followers of all

faiths. It has a definite meaning and a definite significance. One who has followed a particular way and has been successful in having the realisation can speak with special emphasis of that way only. ' There is no other way ' may only mean that ' this is a sure way ' and nothing else. It may be interpreted also literally in another way. Jesus is the Son of God and He and His father are one. If God is righteousness personified, if he is Holiest of the Holies, there is no other way to Him but through Holiness which is represented by Jesus on earth. The link between the Divine and the human, the bond between God and man, between Heaven and Earth, has been maintained by the Son of God, by Holiness and Righteousness, by the element of divinity in man.

If there is to be any one universal religion, it must be the religion that identifies itself with the realisation of the kingdom of the spirit. It is not only the essence, the core of religion, but is the whole of religion. There is the esoteric element in all religions which lays emphasis on this point and shows its importance. Minus this realisation, religion ends in a shadow, an unsubstantial show,—all the pomp and grandeour, all ceremonies and rituals, the high temples, churches and mosques, end in nothingness. Vedantism, Sufism, and the Johannean Gospel, all agree in holding that it is the realisation of the Supreme reality, the realisation of Godhead, that is of absolute importance in religion. Those who have seen the Father, those who have realised the Eternal, will never perish and can never perish. There is no sectarianism, no partisan spirit, no particularity, in the realisation of the Eternal. The Eternal is the unchanging Absolute, with no increase or decrease, with no colour or form, residing in no particular temple or church, lying neither to the north nor to the south, neither to the east nor to the west, belonging to no particular nation or caste, revealing neither to this or that particular prophet, neither in this particular land nor in any other, nor at any particular point in historical time, but is the Truth Abiding in the hearts of all men, civilised and uncivilised, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, and getting itself revealed whenever the occasion arises. But the realisation of the Eternal Truth

comes to very few individuals; the rest have to be contented with hopes and aspirations founded on the testimony of those who have gone before and have had the realisation, founded on the authority of the scriptures and the sacred texts. The symbols of the realisation, the figures and the metaphors in which it is clothed, the circumstances and conditions in which the realisation occurred, are different in different religions. The external rites and ceremonies, the symbols, have to be preserved in order that they may sometimes arouse the conditions accompanying the realisation. This is the exoteric part of religion, and it has been prescribed for the common man, who is commanded to follow all injunctions and prohibitions without any doubt or hesitation. Religions must differ amongst themselves so far as the external symbols, the rites and ceremonies, the dogmas and creeds, are concerned. It is futile and foolish to attempt to reach an agreement in these matters. But although these do not form the essence of religion, these cannot, it should be remembered, be eliminated.

The esoteric element in all religions is very much the same. The experience and realisation of the Eternal, of the same unchanging Eternal, and Absolute Reality, cannot and do not differ. The consideration of the way whereby the Eternal is reached also should not occupy any prominent place. The way through Jesus is certainly one way, but if the Eternal is reached through other ways, what is the harm? And if Jesus means, as we have seen, the Spirit of righteousness, certainly it may be regarded as the only way. We cannot resist here the temptation of quoting certain lines from J. G. Fichte:[1] "If any man be truly united with God, and dwell in him, it is altogether a matter of indifference how he may have attained that union; and it would be a most useless and perverse employment, instead of living in that high relation itself, to be continually conning over our recollections of the way toward it. Could Jesus return to the world, we might expect him to be thoroughly satisfied if he found Christianity actually reigning in the minds of man, whether his merit in the work were recognised or

[1] *The Doctrine of Religion*, Lecture VI, p. 392.

forgotten; and this is, in fact, the very least that might be expected from a man who, while he lived on earth, sought not his own glory but the glory of Him who sent him." Fichte, has, in this beautifully instructive passage, told us that to be united with God is the only concern, and the way whereby the union is attained is not important. It is possible to realise what Christianity stands for without being a Christian. The esoteric element in all religions teaches the same thing. The Hindu realises the union with God; the Christian and the Sufi also experience the same thing. There must be unity and variety in religion as in everything else. To the mystic religion is universal and one. The differences that opponents of religion point out are insignificant and trivial and count for nothing. The sameness of experience, the similarity of language in which it is expressed, the similarity of details in which the revelation appears, are all striking, and it is nothing short of perversity to be blind to these strange coincidences and to be always harping on the differences in minor points. The religion of the mystics, who have neither any native land nor any date of birth is the much-desired universal religion. Let each sincere seeker search for the one universal religion in the depths of his heart and he is sure to find it there. There is a place where there is absolute peace and tranquillity, where there is no ill-feeling or hatred, where there is equanimity and harmony, where the human being feels and experiences the divinity in him, where he seems to rise above all discord and disharmony, where he feels to be at one with the universe, where unity and not separateness is felt to be the truth. It is here that the search for the universal religion is to be conducted and not in the catching phrases of the world Convention of Faiths or of the League of Nations or of the United Nations Organisation. All ways lead to Rome, only not the way of empty abstraction or of airy speculation. One's own religion is the surest means of showing the way to the universal religion,—there is no other way.

Buddhism wanted to appeal to this state of peace and tranquillity in its conception of Nirvaṇa. The experiment of having a religion not only without external rites and ceremonies but even without God was attempted by Buddhism

several centuries before the advent of Jesus Christ. The Buddha discovered that God was a mere hypothesis that was accepted by men on trust. He was taken to be something who was to be given assent to but with whom no contact was to be expected and of whom no realisation was possible. The external rites and ceremonies were taken to be things complete in themselves and people became habituated to acquiesce themselves in their performance only without expecting anything more from them. Men forgot the real meaning and significance of the external rites and ceremonies, and their usefulness in effecting the realisation of God was hardly ever suspected. The Buddha wanted to do away with a God that was not a living reality to His worshippers and remained merely as a dead substance, a profitless burden, an unverifiable hypothesis. He wanted also to dispense with the elaborate sacrifices enjoined by the scriptures which were not seen to yield any fruitful result but which were only believed to be capable of earning merit in the next world or in the life to come. He preached a religion that needed no hypothesis and relied on no dogma but was verified in the heart. It is not a personal God to whom offerings are to be made in order to please Him and seek His favour, but the Buddha appeals to the Divine in man, the godly qualities that have their seat in the human heart and preaches the worship of these qualities alone. In a sense, devotion to Truth, unselfish service to humanity, constant thought of doing good to others, banishment of evil thoughts, hatred, jealousy and ill-feeling against others, the vow of non-violence and non-injury in thought or in deed, sympathy and compassion for the suffering of others, the experience of joy in the happiness of others, the utter indifference to the shortcomings of others,—the cardinal teachings of Buddhism,—may be regarded as the direct worship of God. If God is Truth and Goodness, if God is Light and Love, the life that is entirely devoted to the pursuit of Truth and to the acquisition of knowledge or Light, the life that is dedicated to the realisation of Goodness and Love, ought to be regarded as the life in which God is worshipped directly and concretely. The love that is manifested towards one's fellow-beings is part of the love which God represents.

When Jesus says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;" he is expressing clearly that love towards others is the sure indication of having experienced Divine Love, both in the sense of God's love for His creatures and in the sense of God as Love. The offerings of flowers or oblations to the fire represent only indirect worship, if these do not proceed from Love. When one sacrifices one's life for the sake of Truth, when one hazards one's own life for saving another, when one forsakes one's all to help a man in distress, when one parts with one's dinner in order to feed a famished man, when one renounces the world in one's love for others, that is, when one dies as the individual in order to live the life universal, one must have a vision of the Truth or of the Goodness vividly before one's mind's eye and one must have realised what Love truly means. This is what I have meant by the *direct* worship of God, worship of God as Truth, Light, Life and Love. This means the rising above the ego-sense, the giving up of egoism and individuality, the transcending of the lower self, and perceiving something as higher than the ego. This is what is represented by Buddhism. The ego is analysed and found to be the conglomeration of a plurality of things, all of which are equally impermanent and it is concluded that the ego is not real and there is no such thing as a permanent self. As soon as the ego-sense disappears, desires are eliminated and the root cause of bondage goes. With the elimination of Desire, the way to the Nirvāṇa which is Perfect Peace and Tranquillity, is prepared, and there is liberation from all bondage.

This is what has been preached by the Impersonal Religions. We do not require any personal God for purposes of religion; the unverifiable and useless hypothesis of God may be abandoned without any detriment to religion. So, it may be seen that the cry for dispensing with God and religion is not new and is no special achievement of the modern age. It is at least twenty-five centuries old. The revolt against institutions which become static and mechanical, hackneyed and monotonous, due to want of contact with life and energy

owing to absence of great personalities who are able to infuse fresh life and vigour, is only natural and whenever the real meaning and significance of the institutions have been missed due to long distance from their foundation, this has been the result. Buddhism, having attempted to divest religion of all dogmas and creeds, came to be regarded as merely a code of morals or as a system of morality without religion. Although it is to be seriously considered whether the attempt to establish one universal religion would not end in obliterating religion altogether and establishing in its place only a system of metaphysics or a code of ethics and whether we should not profit by the history of Buddhism, it is not correct to evaluate Buddhism only as a code of ethics. Its strict acceptance of the law of Karma, we have seen, ensures its place among religions, and it should be characterised as a religion without God. If it has characterised all things arising out of conjunction and conglomeration to be impermanent and has thereby shown matter to be non-ultimate and unreal, if it has violently shaken trust and ultimate confidence in things of the world by showing them to be impermanent and to be the source of suffering and misery, if it has shown desire to be the source of all suffering and desirelessness to be the way to liberation, it has unmistakably attempted to show the way to the realisation of the kingdom of the spirit and has earned a high status amongst the most sublime religions of the world.

Buddhism and the other Impersonal Religions may be regarded as representing the first stage in the conception of a synthetic religion. We have seen the defect of the conception of a synthesis of religions attempting to collect the best elements in all religions. Such eclecticism will, as we have seen, dissociate things from their context and will fail to achieve its end. We propose a synthetic religion which will have different stages in its constitution and which will show the place of different religions in the scheme. If the use of the word 'synthesis' suggests something unacceptable due to its long association with other meanings in literature, we have no hesitation in abandoning the term and using some other in its place. We are merely thinking of three prominent stages in religious experience and are

attempting to classify religions under three heads. There is, first, the stage of the purification of the individual self. There is a glimpse of the spirit, there is the dawning of the pure consciousness and everything that has any touch of matter in it is sought to be eliminated. It is perceived that there is something that is eternal, something that is abiding and permanent, something that is indivisible and indestructible, something that remains unchanging and unruffled behind the surface of the changing manifold of the states of consciousness. The Yoga discipline in Hinduism confines itself to the realisation of this calm and undisturbed state of consciousness that is behind the dull and distracted mental states and that is deeper even than the concentrated states of attention. Withdrawal from worldly consciousness, turning away from the object-attitude to the subject-attitude, and an absorption into the subject in complete isolation from the object, are the processes that are recommended for the realisation. This is the subject-attitude *par excellence*, and although the *yoga-samādhi* is interpreted by some to be the realisation of pure consciousness above the division of the subject and the object, it is in reality the realisation of the pure subject as isolated from the object and from all influences coming from the object. This is the first stage in religious experience—a realisation of the spirit, the spirit that is eternal and abiding, pure and free, clear and all light, the spirit that is not material and has no touch of matter in it. The clear recognition of the abiding reality of the spirit and its undoubted and unconditional presence in us marks the beginning of religious experience, and this is the aim of the yoga system in Hinduism. I have attempted to show in these lectures that the Impersonal Religions are not only on a par with the yoga system but they themselves are clearly yogic disciplines, having for their aim the analysis of the subject and the realisation of the pure subject.

The second stage is found in the Personal Religions. The most distinctive characteristic of this stage is the expansion that the seeker undergoes. The religious soul has now felt something that is not merely his own self, that is not confined to the limits of his body, that is, not only his own individual self, purified and untouched by the adjuncts, but

he now speaks of a Presence, within and without, who is as much outside him as within him, who is in all creatures, in stones and trees, in leaves and grasses, and who is also residing in his heart of hearts. In other words, the seeker at this stage realises the cosmic self as distinguished from the individual self, perceives God as the Person that pervades all things and beings and recognises Him as the universal self that is in all individual selves. It is no accident that all Personal Religions, Christianity, Islam, Vaiṣṇavism, the Sakti cult, and others,—should speak of a brotherhood and should be all religions of love. If God is in all beings and things, if the same God who is in me is also in my fellow-beings, in beasts and birds, in all inanimate things, is there room for enmity and hatred, for cruelty and neglect? It may almost be taken as a postulate that he who has not felt any love for his fellow-beings, he who has not found himself in others, he who has not experienced an immense expansion of his self, has not been in contact with the Reality that pervades the entire universe. The individual self finds itself fully expressed in the universal self and feels an attraction for it that has nothing like it and is indeed indescribable. Although emphasis has been laid on God's power and omnipotence in Islam, on God's love and compassion in Christianity, and on God's almightiness (aiśvarya) as well as on God's sweetness and love (mādhurya) in Vaiṣṇavism, it may be stated without hesitation that in all personal religions, there is the same emphasis on devotion and attachment, and God is everything, God is all in all, to the devotee who knows nothing else but his God. God is the object of exclusive interest and attention to his devotee, whether it be in Islam or in Christianity or in Hinduism. There are only two persons,—the devotee and his God;—the whole world is as nothing to the genuine devotee, who is entirely oblivious of everything else but his Lord. The personal relation,—the relation between two persons is regarded as the essence of religion. Where this relation is wanting, it is not religion. It may be philosophy or metaphysics, but it is not religion. The followers of personal religions hold that there is nothing of religion either in the impersonal level, which is at best a way of life and a code

of morality, or in the so-called supra-personal stage, which represents only speculative metaphysics. To answer my religious needs, God must be *my* God in a special sense, in a sense in which He is not any other's, as the extremists among the followers of personal religions are accustomed to put it. But although He is *my* God, although He is *mine*, He is also in everything. It is love and devotion, interest and attention that individuate God who is in reality the universal self, the Absolute that pervades everywhere. The personal relationship, involving a duality between the finite devotee and the Infinite Lord, is the most important thing in the second stage of religion. God is no longer an object of speculative thought to be reached as the conclusion of an inference; He has been realised as a concrete person, and a personal relationship or what the Vaiṣṇavas call *sambandha*, has been established with Him. The conclusive evidence of the establishment of the relationship is manifested in and through the love which the devotee bears towards his fellow-men. It has been truly said, "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." [1] As has been very correctly stated in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, "He who being deluded worships me in my image, leaving me aside as manifest in and through all things and beings, surely offers oblations to the ashes (and not to the fire)."

Yo mām sarveṣu bhūteṣu santamātmānamīśvaram,
Hitvārcām bhajate mauḍhyāt bhasmanyeva juhoti sah.

Worshipping God inside the temple or the church or the mosque is no worship at all, if it is not accompanied by service to humanity, service to the world at large; such worship becomes entirely fruitless just like the offering of oblations to the ashes when the fire is extinguished. God's living presence is to be felt in His creatures and His creation. The devotee becomes overflowing with love and compassion when he experiences communion with God who is all Love. The love must be there and this is the real touchstone, the unmistakable proof that the devotee is in God and that God is in him. The Bhagavad-

[1] *The First Epistol of St. John*, Ch. II, pp. 9-10.

gītā rightly declares that "the yogi who feels others' pleasures and pains as his own is the most perfect". As God is the source and substratum of everything, there cannot be an unbridgeable gulf between one's own self and another. "He who maintains even a little difference between his own self and another, is doomed to destruction." The Sermon on the Mount beautifully says that no offering can be made to God or rather that God does not accept any offering unless and until love has displaced hatred and disharmony. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." [1] Real worship or what the Bhagavadgītā designates as *bhāva-samanvita bhajana*, only happens when one realises that God is the source of everything and that everything has proceeded from Him.

Ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavaḥ mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate,
Iti matvā bhajante mām budhāh bhāvasmanvitāh.

The cosmic Presence, the Universal self, the Absolute pervading the entire universe, has been felt at the second stage of religious experience to be the Reality by the devotee. But it is to be noted that at this stage, the devotee as the subject perceives God as the object of his love and adoration, as the embodiment of all his ideals, as the personification of all values, as representing Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The distinction between the seer and the seen, the subject and the object, the lover and the beloved, remains at this stage.

The third and the last stage is represented by the supra-personal religions. God is no longer conceived as the object of devotion and love, but He represents all being and all existence, including that of the devotee himself. No distinction can any longer be maintained between the worshipper and the worshipped, between the lover and the beloved. God can no longer be conceived as a person involving the inherent division between his self and its states, but all is resolved into a unity. The distinction between the subject, object and process, the *tripuṭi*, as the Vedantist calls it, becomes transcended at this stage. It is the infinite, the *Bhūmā*,

[1] *St. Mathew V.*, pp. 23-24.

that has nothing outside it, that has no before and after, that has no finis or limit or boundary, that is to the right as well as to the left, that is as much in the front as at the back, that is upwards as well as downwards, that transcends, in other words, the categories of space and time, that is realised at this stage. One who knows this Infinite, this *Bhūmā*, this Brahman, becomes Brahman. There is no way of realising Brahman without being identified with Brahman. If the subject remains outside Brahman as its knower that would impose a limit on Brahman and would reduce the Infinite to the level of the finite. The Vedantist says that Brahman transcends God, the Taoist holds the Tao to be before God, the Sufi also proclaims the identity of the self and the Absolute in his Anal Haq. At this stage the climax is reached and all multiplicity, all division, all foreignness, becomes absorbed in the Absolute, not as aggregated or juxtaposed, but as being transcended in the highest synthesis that knows no antithesis. There is nothing alien, no not-self, that calls for an explanation, but at this stage everything is realised to be the self. The quest for knowledge attains its completion here and it is felt that all that is required to be attained has been attained. The scriptures declare that this is the end of the journey, this is the highest truth, this is the consummation, this is the goal, *A priori* also this is bound to be the highest stage, because there is here no multiplicity, no 'why' that calls for an explanation. The Sufi declares the state of union or the state of absorption or annihilation, the *fanā*, to be the highest stage of realisation. One can expect to find in this stage of realisation, which is above all multiplicity and division, that much-desired universal religion that can end all discord and disharmony. This universal religion is not the possession of the Hindu or the Christian or the Muslim or the Buddhist alone, but it is the possession of each and all of the religious souls. This universal religion is found in the Mahāyāna conception of the Buddhist Nirvāṇa, in the Vedantic conception of the identity of the individual and the Absolute, in the Gospel of St. John, and in the Sufi conception of the stage of union. Here a depth is reached by each religion which transcends the surface differences and shows the agreement of all with

one another. It is not giving up anything of itself on the part of any religion, it is not a synthesis or aggregation of the doctrines of several religions leaving aside many of their basic beliefs, it is not eclecticism, but it is merely attempting to understand the true significance and the inner meaning of one's own religion by entering into a depth which alone can reveal its secret truth, its esoteric element. We have dealt with Vedantism, Sufism and Taoism as instances of Supra-Personal Religion. We shall now conclude by attempting to find out the universal truth in religion or the elements of universal religion in the Gospel of St. John.

Throughout the Gospel of St. John the identity of Jesus Christ with God has been sought to be established. It is not only that Christ says in so many words that he and his Father are one, and that he that hath seen him hath seen the 'Father', and that the request of Philip for showing the Father was meaningless when he had been with them for a long time, but he also explains the philosophy of the identity not only of the Son of God with the Father but of the identity of God with men. In the beginning the Word was not only with God but the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and the only begotten son of God became the son of Man. When Jesus says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you",[1] "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life",[2] "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him",[3] "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me",[4] he definitely indicates that it is possible for man not only to acquire divine qualities, but also to completely identify himself with Christ and thus also with his Father. This identity is meant when Jesus speaks of the eating of His flesh and blood, of devouring Him up altogether, of completely surrendering to Him, of keeping nothing as one's own, of retaining nothing of one's flesh and blood, that is, of the body, of the common flesh, of filling up the entire self with the flesh and blood of the spirit, so that instead of the life that is fleeting and perishable, one may have the eternal, the everlasting life. Because man

[1] *St. John*, VI, 53.
[2] *Ibid.*, VI, 54. [3] *Ibid.*, VI, 56. [4] *Ibid.*, VI, 57.

is inherently divine, because he was made after the image of God, because God has given him the Love that is His own and has given him life out of His own life, because He has himself descended as the Son of Man in order to live amongst them as man, there is nothing that can separate man from God and keep him away from Him. As spirit, man is not different from God and it is no wonder that man should realise God and that the Kingdom of God would be established in Earth, as it is in Heaven. We have stated in an earlier lecture that if Jesus is interpreted to stand for righteousness, there is nothing that would sound as anything strange in the statement, " No man cometh unto the father, but by me." Surely there is no other road to God but the road of righteousness. And it is clearly stated in the First Epistle of John [1] that " Jesus is the righteous ", " And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous ", Christ Jesus is not to be taken only as an individual born at a particular point of time in history, but is to be regarded as the universal spirit, the everlasting and abiding life, the permanent and unchangeable self that is Absolute. And Christ Jesus says this unambiguously, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am ".[2] It is exactly what Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gīta, that He is before all gods and demons, before all men, before all sages and saints, above the happenings of the temporal process, and that as everything and everybody come after Him, none is able to know and comprehend His Reality and His mysterious births and works. The self of the individual man is also eternal and imperishable, and as spirit there is not the slightest difference between the individual and the universal. It is the body, the flesh, the matter, that seems to impose limitation and shows the universal to be individual and particular. Jesus is continually laying emphasis on the spirit and showing its contrast with flesh. " That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." [3] " Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." [4] No doubt is to be entertained about man's divinity

[1] Chapter II, 1.
[2] *St. John*, VIII, 58. [3] *St. John*, III, 6. [4] *Ibid.*, III, 5.

and about the possibility of his realisation of God. The flesh does not enter the Kingdom of God, and man's limitation is due to his flesh. One is not to shudder at the thought of man's identity with God. The spirit cannot be differentiated from spirit, and the spirit that enters the Kingdom of God is itself Divine. Principal Caird has rightly said that man's knowledge of God is God's knowledge of Himself. We should always bear in mind the memorable words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St. John and banish all our doubts and fears on the score: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." This is the teaching of all sublime texts. When the Vedas declare, *ayamātmā Brahman*, this very self is the Absolute, or *tat tvam asi*—'Thou art That', or *aham brahmāsi*, 'I am the Absolute', or *prajñānam brahma*, 'this consciousness is brahman', this eternal truth of the identity of man with God, the identity of spirit and spirit, is preached, and the truth of religion is established, and the universal and the eternal truth in religion is pointed out clearly. Man has been given a sense of the Infinite and his constitution has destined him to be in search of the Infinite; he can never throw away religion at his own sweet will. Man cannot live by bread alone; he is in need of *that* bread which can give him everlasting life. He refuses to be satisfied with a perishable existence, with mere material comfort and prosperity. If man is miserable all the world over at the present day, it is not because he is religious, but because he is not *sufficiently* religious. The way to relieve man of his miserable condition is not to teach him to dispense with religion but to remind him of the words of great teachers like Sri Krishna, Buddha and Jesus Christ, that it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth not, and that in this perishable world which is full of misery, the only thing that profiteth is the indomitable will, the unwavering determination, the bull-dog tenacity to find and realise the Imperishable that is in all of us.